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The Living Tradition

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CHANGE AND AMERICA

Simeon Strunsky



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Preface

THE PRESENT VOLUME might be described as an informal review of certain main aspects of American life in the nation's sesquicentennial season and, as the phrase goes, in this age of transition. It differs from most books on the subject of a changing America in that it is not primarily concerned with the things that have changed or are in process of changing but with the things that have remained the same through the years. Its theme would be the permanent nation.

The forces of change let loose by ten years of business depression, the forces let loose by the World War a quarter of a century ago and the forces operating over a century and a half of national existence have combined to turn men's thoughts in the direction of new eras, new civilizations and new worlds including a new America. Especially in this last decade of economic invalidism and even more particularly in the years following upon the election of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the inauguration of the New Deal it has become a habit to speak of our times as a revolutionary age, of our problems as unprecedented and of American life as changed beyond recognition. This widespread inability to recognize the United States seems to be independent of any special time-scale. It is the most natural thing in the world that people shall find the United States of 1939 changed beyond recognition from the United States of 1789. It seems in the order of things that even compared with the Jacksonian republic of one hundred years ago this should be today an unrecognizable nation. But observers have got the same effect from shorter vistas. They have found the country changed beyond recognition from the horse-and-buggy nation of fifty years ago under Grover Cleveland. The country has changed beyond recognition since 1914. It has changed beyond recognition since 1929. It has changed beyond recognition since March 4, 1933.

The present volume, on the other hand, contains the findings of one observer who has looked at the United States in recent years and experienced no difficulty in recognizing it; and it is the author's belief that his case is not an isolated one or even a rare one. It is not a question here of the individual standpoint and mood. In the last two years, for instance, many harsh critics of the national record have been converted to a friendly view of the American democracy as it looms up today against a sinister international background. Yet the elementary data of the American record should be independent of the mood of the moment. At all times one must be on guard against the state of mind which accepts the slogan for the real thing, the prophecy for the fact. People are tempted to see this or that lesson of the World War in operation when actually the lesson has not yet been learned. They will see the business depression profoundly modifying the nation's temper and behavior when the evidence for such changes is still lacking, if not actually pointing in the opposite direction. People have taken note of the passing of the Frontier fifty years ago and the beginning of mass immigration about the same time and deduced startling consequences that are as yet nothing but theory.

This book, then, is an attempt to test the validity of current doctrine about the United States by taking a look at the actual conditions. Part of the time our informal review finds occasion to make use of statistics, names and dates. They are not the product of deep research; but there is such a thing as familiar data and everyday experience getting lost in the swirl of dogma and slogan. In fact, it would be part of our argument that often there is no need of delving down in search of "fundamentals." It is a problem rather of bringing back into the focus of one's vision the simple facts that we have always known to be there.

To call this book a survey of American life would be presumptuous, and for more than one reason. But the book does try to look at a sufficient number of items in the national record to give us a glimpse of the general idea. In somewhat random fashion we have tried to find out how far the great American Constants are still in operation—Size, Fluidity, Equality, Political Activity as a Good in Itself. Two long chapters take up the World War and the business collapse of 1929 as outstanding tests of American behavior. In any event, the book presents the observations and reflections of a working American journalist in the troubled years after 1929 and, more particularly, the exciting half-dozen years since 1933.

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The Living Tradition

CHAPTER I

From Coast to Coast

THE AREA of the continental United States is a trifle over three million square miles. By the continental United States is meant the solid rectangle between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, between Canada and the Gulf of Mexico. Within these boundaries there lived in the year 1930 a population of one hundred and twenty-three million less a few hundred thousand. Forecasts of the 1940 census point to approximately one hundred and thirty-two million people. The United States has thirty-five times the area of Great Britain with something less than three times the population. It is fourteen times as large as France with something more than three times the population. It has three eighths the area of the Soviet Union with approximately two thirds the population.

Beyond the confines of a farm or a real-estate development most people prefer to think in terms of distance rather than of area. A person in Bangor, Maine, which is the nearest good-sized town to the north-eastern edge of the United States rectangle, would have to journey thirty-five hundred miles by rail to get to Seattle, across the northern rim of the country. He would journey two thousand miles by rail and automobile down the eastern edge of the country to reach Key West. He would travel thirty-seven hundred miles if he cut across country on the bias, to San Diego in our southernmost corner, and another fourteen hundred and forty miles up the coast to Seattle. It would be thirty-two hundred miles by rail from New York to San Francisco and thirteen hundred miles from St Paul, Minnesota, to Galveston, Texas.

For that matter, it may well be asked if distances in themselves have any meaning for us today, except when we quote the mileages to show how fast we covered them by automobile. What matters in measuring

distance is time. Today the train time from New York to San Francisco or to Los Angeles is something over eighty hours. From Portland, Maine, to Miami would be about forty-two hours. From Chicago to New Orleans would be about thirty-two hours. But is not railroad time as a measure of distance itself fast becoming obsolete? In January 1937 Howard Hughes flew from Los Angeles to Newark, New Jersey, in seven and a half hours. The airlines between New York and the Pacific coast maintain a twenty-hour schedule. The time would thus seem to be at hand when the airplane will relegate the locomotive to the same museum with the covered wagon of 1843 which took five months to travel the two thousand miles from Missouri to Oregon, and with the stagecoach which required a day and a half to go from New York to Philadelphia, four days from New York to Boston and twenty-five days from Boston to Savannah.

But we must not jump to conclusions, even by airplane. We shall be in a better position to speak of the obsolescence of train time as the gauge of distance when the airplane has really superseded the railroad, first, as a large-scale passenger carrier and, second, and far more important, as the freight carrier of the nation. It will be a good many years before these things come to pass, and in the meanwhile we might profitably look a little deeper into this whole question of distance and speed in the national life.

Discovery and invention in the lifetime of the United States have cut down distances in the world at large, anywhere from five times, measuring by the ordinary accommodation train, to seventy-five times, measuring by our fastest airlines. And if the steamboat, railroad, automobile and airplane have conquered space, the telegraph, telephone and wireless have annihilated space. On a terrestrial globe which men have circumnavigated by airplane in eight days there lies our continental United States which has been traversed in less than half a day. Across it men are now speaking by telephone as they may soon be speaking face to face by television. To this extraordinary development in transportation and communication it has been the custom to ascribe chief credit for the fact that the area of the United States now contains only one nation instead of several nations. We are told that without the railroad it would have been impossible to operate a single governmental system over three million square miles. Imagine members of Congress journeying two months on horseback from Los Angeles or Seattle to reach the capital of the United States, even if we assume the seat of government to have been removed to a more central location in St Louis.

No one today would question the major role which the technology

of transportation, beginning with steam, has played in shaping the entire complex of modern life, economic, social and spiritual. And yet even so mighty a force as the conquest of space can be overestimated in the popular reckoning. It has unquestionably been overstressed in the doctrine that without steam communication we should not have our continental union of states today. People are always asking why, with San Francisco only three and a half days from New York by train, and Chicago a day and a half from New Orleans, there should still be in this country so many divergencies, so many local and sectional interests not always in tune with the national interest. Serious students of our civilization have said that sectionalism is a standing threat, and even a growing threat, to the national existence. How is this conceivable with Omaha only a few hours by airplane from New York and only an instant by telephone?

The answer is that time, after all, cannot be taken as the sole measure of distance. People and places may be farther apart or nearer together than the train and plane schedules would imply. There is an error on both sides of the equation, once upon a time and now. We exaggerate the extent to which modern communications have brought men together. We exaggerate the extent to which men in the days before steam and telegraph lived apart. Spain four hundred years ago conquered and administered an empire across four months of ocean, measuring by sail. Long before that, Rome administered an empire without railroads. England in the eighteenth century built up her empire without steamships.

These considerations will hold for the American people. Twenty hours from New York to San Francisco by air exaggerates the degree to which our people today are neighbors. Twenty-five days from Boston to Charleston in 1802 exaggerates the degree to which the sections in President Jefferson's day were apart. The reason is obviously that neither in 1802 nor in 1939 did the whole body of the American people spend its time riding around either in stagecoaches or in railroads, automobiles and airplanes. In all ages most of the people stay at home most of the time and devote themselves to a body of interests centered about their homes. Their attitudes and their loyalties are what their homes and their home interests make them.

Mileages and distances, in other words, are more important than we consider them to be. Area is of importance. The homes of one hundred

and thirty million Americans are situated not in time but in space and their lives are permanently conditioned by basic phenomena within that space. The farmer's one hundred and sixty acres cover the same area whether a hay wagon crawls along the dirt road at two miles an hour or an airplane thunders over the farmer's head at two hundred and fifty miles an hour. To be sure the farmer's one hundred and sixty acres in terms of bushels of wheat are not wholly the same in the stagecoach age and in the airplane era. Farm machinery and synthetic fertilizer have given him bigger yields. The railroad and motor truck create his market. Radio keeps him in touch with world grain prices. But the change has not been beyond recognition; the historic equation still holds, and crops equal acres plus weather. The farmer's war is against his ancient enemy—drought, flood, pests, unseasonable heat and cold. He is by no means immune from the immemorial hazards and rules of his profession.

In 1930 we had thirty million people living on farms, and we must distinguish between their working hours and their leisure hours. The latter have been enormously influenced by the Machine Age. The modern farmer can jump into his car and run fifty miles into town to obtain a spare part for his tractor, but much more frequently his children will travel that distance to the motion pictures. The isolation of farm life in the sense in which isolation was universal one hundred years ago can hardly be said to exist. The automobile, telephone, telegraph, newspaper and radio have created a new horizon for the farmer's unoccupied hours; but to the extent that a man's inner life is shaped by his work, the fundamentals of the farmer's life are largely what they were one hundred years ago. He must still plow and cultivate and reap in season. He must still think of rain and dew and frost and thaw. The rhythm of his labors has not been readjusted to the pace of the automobile and the radio.

The occupational factor will hold, in varying degrees, for the non-farmer. Urban and industrial life reflects the great changes which have been wrought in our thinking and our behavior by the pace of the Machine Age; but occupation is more potent than pace. The daily life of the urban American is shaped by influences more decisive than the fact that New York and San Francisco are only three and a half days apart by rail, that Seattle and Miami can talk to each other over the telephone and in all these places men can listen simultaneously to the same radio speaker. The way men feel and think and act today is still primarily determined by occupation and domicile. We do not mention

language, religion and race because we are now concerned with concrete physical phenomena in space.

It is said that when William J. Bryan, in the Democratic National Convention at Baltimore in 1912, made his onslaught on the conservative wing of the party, there poured in upon the eleven hundred members of the convention no less than one hundred and ten thousand telegrams from their constituents urging support for Mr Bryan. Such a mobilization of farmers and workers is inconceivable in the year 1812, before the telegraph and telephone. Yet the way an agricultural debtor class felt about its Wall Street creditors in 1912 is remarkably like the way farmers in 1812 felt about their creditors; and the way Roman farmers in 300 B.C. felt about their mortgage holders.

Transportation and communication are not everything; and especially when we fail to grasp what transportation and communication mean. We think of the railroad as a device which enables a man to go from Boston to Los Angeles, a distance of thirty-three hundred miles, in four days. Much the greater importance of the railroad consists in the fact that it is a device which enables a man living in Boston to stay in Boston and produce things there which he sends by rail to the man in Los Angeles in exchange for things which the man in Los Angeles produces and sends to Boston. In the year 1929 the freight revenue of the American railroads was more than six times the passenger revenue. In the year 1930 the railroads carried slightly more than seven hundred million passengers for an average distance of thirty-eight miles. This is as if every man, woman and child in the country had six train rides of thirty-eight miles in the course of the year. It means one annual train ride of less than two hundred and fifty miles for every person in the country. That plainly does not call up a picture of all the people in the country spending their whole time traveling from New York to San Francisco or from Seattle to Miami.

In the same year that the railroads carried perhaps forty-five million tons of living passengers, they carried 2,179 million tons of freight. They carried nearly fifty tons of goods for every ton of passengers. It is not the picture of a nation engaged in running about from place to place on trains or talking to each other by telephones. It shows us people staying where they are, and producing things, and sending them to each other as freight—wheat, corn, beef, oranges, soft coal, anthracite, furniture, steel, cotton, lumber, clothing, books and films. These multitudes of workers staying where they are, are subject to the major determinants of occupation and place. All the transportation and com-

munication in the world will not suffice to wipe out the basic differences between a Gloucester fisherman, a California orange grower, a New York dress manufacturer and a Chicago grain operator.

That is why we must not be surprised to find that people are not really as close together in purpose and feeling as we think they ought to be because the world has grown smaller and contacts have multiplied. Improved means of communication are a centrifugal as well as a centripetal force. They diversify as well as assimilate. Better train service encourages co-operation but also enables people to get away from each other. One hundred and fifty years ago a nation made up of self-sufficient farmers displayed a uniformity to which our own times cannot aspire. In the year 1800 a farmer in Carolina and a farmer in western Pennsylvania might be far apart in space and time, but they were close together occupationally. In the year 1939 a city man knows that by telephoning to the butcher he may have a steak delivered in fifteen minutes, and by running downtown he can get himself a suit of clothes in forty-five minutes and acquire a set of household furniture in two days perhaps. This man, knowing that he can lay his hand on anything he wants whenever he wants it, feels free to devote himself to any occupation that strikes his fancy. If he so wishes he can go in for stamp-collecting or tight-rope walking or preparing himself to be an explorer on the Amazon. He can diversify himself away from his fellow men because modern division of labor, modern facilities of communication and transportation have removed all danger of his starving or going naked or shelterless. Railroad trains and airplanes serve to take people occupationally away from each other as well as bring them physically together.

We must not wonder, therefore, if people today fail to live up to the traditional ideas of neighborliness. People may live next door to each other in a big city and have nothing in common, whereas the farmer in western Pennsylvania had a great deal in common with the farmer in Vermont one hundred and fifty years ago. American life at the beginning of the republic was not as loosely held together as one might argue from the fact that the only means of communication were stagecoach, horseback or sailing vessel. To say that without the binding force of steam there could have been no United States stretching all the way across the continent is to overlook the simple fact that such a United States actually was in existence nearly a generation before the railroad came into being. When President Jefferson acquired Louisiana Territory in 1803 the area of the United States was thereby extended to within striking distance of the Pacific Ocean in the Oregon region.

To argue that without steam navigation on the rivers and, later, the railroads, the immense Louisiana territory could not have been held together is pure conjecture. We have seen that Rome and Spain and England built up empires without steam. Only a few years after the founding of Boston the Cossack riders of the Russian czars, marching across Siberia, had reached the Pacific Ocean, and from that time Moscow ruled, for nearly three hundred years, over an empire stretching six thousand miles from the Baltic to Bering Sea. Only during the last twenty years of the period was there a Siberian railroad in existence to hold this enormous territory together.

There is one major reason why people tend to exaggerate the difficulties of maintaining a single national rule over great areas without modern methods of communication. We unconsciously confuse our schedules of speeds and stresses. We think of the pace of modern life as trying to function under primitive conditions. We picture the modern temper as existing before the railroad and the telegraph and the telephone. We think of people wanting to go from New York to San Francisco in three and a half days and being compelled to take four months for the journey by stagecoach or horseback.

But obviously when the existing travel facilities require four months between New York and San Francisco no one ever thinks of doing it in four days, though here and there perhaps a bold innovator may be nursing a scheme for crossing the continent in the lightning time of four weeks. It is as if we called up a picture of the United States in wartime defending itself with flintlocks, horse artillery and sail power against an enemy equipped with machine guns, tanks, submarines and airplanes. Actually an invading army of 1780 moved as slowly as an army acting on the defensive. If it took a long time to bring up North Carolina militiamen to the battlefield of Saratoga in 1778 it took George III a longer time still to send a troop transport across the Atlantic. Our military terms here are, of course, purely figurative. Our attacking army is the demands of life at a particular epoch in a particular setting, and our defending army is the existing resources. If the United States were being whirled around at the end of a titan string at the speed of 1939 but was held together only by the cohesive forces of life in 1790, obviously the United States would fly apart into fragments. Fortunately, before we had steam and rail and wire and wireless to bind the United States together, this nation was being whirled around at a much slower pace than it is today.

3

There was operating in the formative years of the nation one cohesive force which lies wholly outside of the realm of steam and rail and wire, though it has not failed to profit by such physical agencies. That was the binding force of an Idea. It was the spirit of union pervading the atmosphere of the Thirteen Colonies, the sense of a common destiny, the feeling of participation in the building of a United States long before there was a United States. Too much stress has been laid by historians upon the perils which beset the Thirteen States in the anxious half-dozen years after they had achieved their independence and before they had achieved unity. It is the Critical Period of American history of which John Fiske wrote a hundred years later. As we look back at it now it is hard to think of its being a critical period in the sense of there being a choice between a United States and no United States. What else could there be but, sooner or later, a United States? Historians emphasize the hard battles that had to be fought to get the Constitution ratified. We think, for instance, of New York where Alexander Hamilton had to be enlisted in support of a Constitution that he cordially disliked and where the issue was decided by only the narrowest margin of victory. Yet few historians fail to stress the fact that in 1787, before the Constitutional Convention met, the separate states had ceded their Western lands to Congress, to hold as the common possession of—what? In the creation of a Northwest Territory before there was a United States there was implicit the firm belief that there would be a United States.

Given the binding force of this sense of a common destiny, the actual facilities of communication among the people of the Thirteen Colonies are of secondary importance. In the prelude to the Revolution it is quite true that Samuel Adams at Boston, using the telephone and telegraph and radio, could have communicated with Patrick Henry in Virginia in minutes or hours where it actually took days and weeks. But, after all, once communication was established it was fairly unimportant if a letter from Samuel Adams to Patrick Henry took fourteen days to travel, provided a letter from Governor Hutchinson in Boston to George III's government in London traveled at the same slow tempo.

The United States came into being as the expression of an Idea. The expansion of the Thirteen States was the progressive restatement of that Idea. Far ahead of the march of the Frontier was men's awareness of the continent. It was not a case of pioneers groping ahead in the dark.

The knowledge of what lay ahead of the American settler as he marched forward from the Atlantic coast was always there. Henry Hudson sailed up his river on the chance that it might lead him to the Pacific Ocean, and John Smith had the same hopes about the Virginia rivers. The distance to the Pacific Ocean was absurdly underestimated, but people knew there was a Pacific Ocean, and the westward urge to the Pacific dates from the very beginnings of exploration, and, needless to say, from the beginnings of a fringe of English settlement on the Atlantic seaboard a hundred years later.

This westward march has not been a steady advance from one conquered position to the next one. The Frontier has not marched but has leapfrogged. The map of our territorial expansion bears certain names in conjunction with certain dates—Northwest Territory, 1787; Louisiana, 1803; Florida, 1819; Texas, 1845. This does not mean that the American people waited for the Northwest Territory to fill up before spilling over the Mississippi into hitherto empty Missouri, and then Texas, and then the Pacific coast. It was not a case of the saturation point reached in the old settlements and the pioneer moving forward into the unknown. The area of the United States has been occupied in great forward bounds which left behind them great stretches with very thin population. President Jefferson did not buy Louisiana because the old Northwest Territory was crowded. When he acquired the trans-Mississippi in 1803 there were perhaps sixty thousand people living in Ohio, perhaps ten thousand in Indiana and Illinois, and Michigan and Wisconsin were empty. When Missouri became a state in 1820 it had more inhabitants than Illinois on the east bank of the Mississippi. When the first covered wagon train left Missouri in 1843 for the Oregon country the present Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota and Dakotas were empty. When California was admitted into the Union in 1850 we had living west of the Mississippi River a population of less than two million, and western New York was a semi-frontier region. That is to say, we first established ourselves on the Pacific and then went back nearly all the way and started to fill in. In the territorial expansion of the United States it cannot be said that we have regularly bitten off more than we could chew, because in the long run we have chewed it and digested it all. But we have cut huge slices from the bread loaf long before we were finished with the slice on hand. In the year 1811 Illinois had perhaps fifteen thousand inhabitants, but in that year Americans were on the Pacific coast at Astoria. In the history of white enterprise on this continent this awareness of a whole continent can be carried to the very beginnings. Within twenty years after Columbus the white man had glimpsed the Pacific.

Within thirty years after Columbus the Spaniards had conquered their Mexican empire from ocean to ocean.

One of the very earliest American mental habits, therefore, was Size, and the habit has persisted to the present day. Four hundred years ago the new continent was already to the European imagination what the United States is still to the European imagination—it was the land of magnificent distances and unlimited possibilities. The ideas entertained by Hernando De Soto in 1540 about the riches of what is now the United States are very like the ideas about America still held by a hundred million European peasants; except that access to these riches has been shut off by our new immigration laws. Foreign commentators on the United States up to the other day spoke in virtually the same tone employed by John Smith three hundred and twenty-five years ago. They spoke of a land of boundless horizons. An acrid native criticism, trained upon our American life in the years after the World War, had many sharp things—a few true things—to say about the dominant national passion for bigger and better. But it is a mistake to suppose that the worship of size and its identification with quality are latter-day traits in the American character, eminently proper to a booster and high-pressure salesman civilization. From the very first the lure of America for the European peoples has been precisely that of a bigger and better place; of spaces ever so much bigger and freer than the confined and pre-empted lands of the Old World. That has been the vision of America, whatever doubts may be raised about the facts by newer fashions in historic interpretation. Size is one of the constants of American history.

4

President Roosevelt, speaking in June 1936 in Little Rock at the centennial celebration of Arkansas statehood, compared the simplicity of life one hundred years ago with its complexity today:

The roar of the airplane has replaced the rumble of the covered wagon and the frontiers of a continent are spanned in less time than it took to cross an Arkansas county in those century-old days.

Today that life is gone. Its simplicity has vanished and we are each and all of us parts of a social civilization which ever tends to greater complexity.

This is the statement of a creed underlying much of our modern thinking. It is assumed that life one hundred years ago was not merely

simpler than it is today, which is obvious, but that life one hundred years ago was all simplicity and today it is all complexity. Our contacts and communications today, because they are so much more numerous and much more speedy, have brought about a state of things unknown and unsuspected one hundred years ago. Before the roar of the airplane was heard in the land the different sections of the United States were little concerned with each other. Prosperity in one section did not affect the rest of the country. In those days economic depression was a local and not a national problem. All this would be implied in the "life that is gone."

This habit of pitting the airplane age against the covered-wagon age involves the strange procedure of omitting a number of big intermediate stages, such as the railroad age and before that the steamboat age and the canal boat age. We did not traverse at one bound the interval between the covered wagon and the airplane, and every intermediate stage was a move from the simpler life to the more complex. Jars and dislocations were known before our time. The airplane's gain in speed over the railroad is much smaller than the railroad's advantage one hundred years ago over the covered wagon and the stagecoach. The shock to the nation's life imparted by the leap from horse transportation to steam was much greater than the change from steam to flying machine. Consequently we may argue that an economic system and a political system which handsomely survived the first breathtaking transition from horse to locomotive can a priori be expected to stand very well the passage from locomotive to airplane. Professor Channing describes three journeys made in 1796, 1836 and 1845 as reflecting changed conditions of travel. In December 1796 Moses Austin left Virginia and journeyed thirty miles a day to Harrodsburg, Kentucky. Crossing the Ohio on ice and by boat he reached Kaskaskia on the Mississippi, a distance of perhaps four hundred miles, in almost exactly a month. In November 1836 Lucian Minor journeyed from Baltimore to Shawneetown in Illinois by stagecoach on the National Road and by steamboat down the Ohio and the canals in twenty-three days for a distance of perhaps seven hundred miles. In 1845 W. W. Greenough traveled from Detroit to Boston by steamship and railroad, a distance of seven hundred and fifty miles, in less than three and a half days. Thus in the space of forty years, between 1796 and 1836, the speed of travel in the United States had risen only from fifteen miles a day to thirty miles a day. Then in less than ten years the pace quickened sevenfold, from thirty miles a day to two hundred and twenty-five miles a day. As late as 1817 the time from Boston to New York was eighty hours. The change from eighty hours

by stagecoach to eight hours by train was a greater acceleration than the change from four days by train between New York and the Pacific to twenty hours by commercial airplane.

We may put it another way. In the very year that Arkansas was entering the Union we were entering on the 1837 panic. It was a crash precipitated by the overbuilding of canals and railroads, and that is a process which obviously means a growing complexity and integration. Indeed the triumph of the democratic West in the person of Andrew Jackson, as cited by Mr Roosevelt in his Little Rock speech, could only have been brought about by national expansion and sectional diversity and growing complexity. It was already a United States in which the Western agrarians stood arrayed against Eastern bank capital.

We may go back of the railroads to an event which every American schoolboy has been taught to memorize—the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. The school children have been taught to agree with Channing:

The Erie Canal stands out from all others of that period in its influence on building up the industries of the East, peopling the farms of the West, and providing the laboring masses of large portions of Europe with food.

Charles A. Beard says:

A second epoch in the union of the East and the West opened with the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825, offering an all-water inland route from New York to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi valley. . . . The charge for carrying goods was reduced by the Erie Canal from \$32 a ton per hundred miles to \$1.

How many economic revolutions of our own time will compare with a slash of ninety-seven per cent in freight rates?

That is why it is so surprising to find today historians as well as statesmen dazzled by the complexity of a United States in which Chicago-dressed meats are eaten in Florida, and ladies' dresses made in New York are worn in Idaho and Alaska; as though more than a hundred years ago Illinois-grown wheat were not being eaten in New York and in London.

In the early days [says Professor Beard] twenty men had to work hard with sail and oar to drive a five-ton scow up the Mississippi at the rate of ten to twenty miles a day. In 1825 Timothy Green on a steamboat made one hundred miles a day upstream. Three years later the round trip from Louisville to New Orleans, a distance of eighteen hundred miles, was cut to eight days.

The journey down to New Orleans by flatboat might remind us that young Abraham Lincoln made that trip. People went down the river on rafts, selling the timber on arrival in New Orleans. This argues that there was interdependence between the Illinois country and the mouth of the Mississippi. In 1830 Daniel Webster was debating with Hayne the preservation of the Union. Two years later South Carolina was threatening secession on issues, as we have all been taught, arising from the clash of interests between the agricultural and antitariff South and the manufacturing and high-tariff New England. From the threat of South Carolina secession in 1832 we may go back another twenty years to the War of 1812 and the threat of New England secession as a protest against the war, which wrecked the Federalist party. It was a war, incidentally, precipitated by the young democracy from beyond the Alleghanies in 1812 speaking through Henry Clay and soon to express itself in Andrew Jackson.

Time obviously has emphasized differentiation, interdependence and complexity. The housewife today who depends on all of the United States—with most of the rest of the world—to feed and clothe her family is in a different case from the farmer's wife of one hundred years ago who fed and clothed her people from the products of the homestead. But even one hundred years ago the basic well-being of the sturdy American farmer depended on the national well-being. The mad speculation that preceded the crash of 1837 was nation wide. "Everybody was making money," says Channing, "and putting it into lands, banks, roads, canals, railroads, buildings, factories and cotton." How like our own integrated 1929 United States this sounds! And still more. "Paper towns" in Wisconsin were sold in New York, and Georgia gold mines were capitalized and put on the market at one hundred and two hundred per cent above their value. And the result?

Whatever the cause of the panic [says Professor Beard] the disaster was widespread; bank after bank went under; boom towns in the West collapsed; Eastern mills shut down; working people in the industrial centers, starving from unemployment, begged for relief.

So much for the simple America of 1837, compared with the complex America invoked by President Roosevelt in his Arkansas speech a hundred years later.

In the colonization and growth of the United States—and Canada as well—there is little support for the doctrine which explains history in

terms of geography and climate. It is a method which never fails to justify the *status quo*. If a mountain people like the Swiss exhibit thrift and other homely qualities but achieve little distinction in the intellectual sphere it is only what we might expect from the bitter struggle against a harsh environment. But if a mountain people like the Scotch exhibit thrift along with high intellectual interests it is only what we should expect from a people compelled to sharpen its wits in conflict against an unkind environment. The harsh New England winter joined with the original Puritanism of the settlers to build up the traditional forbidding New England temperament. But it is not explained why Puritanism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries should have made its last stand in sub-tropical Texas and southern California.

Certain maxima and minima in the relation between climate and man may be conceded. The white man cannot thrive in tropical Asia, and the Japanese, in spite of the severe population pressure at home, have been unable to accommodate themselves to the cold of Manchuria; but we need further proof in the case of Japan to show whether this is really climate at work or race character and habit. In the case of the European peoples we know that while heat does set up a frontier which the white man cannot cross there is no such barrier of cold. French settlers from Brittany and Normandy have lived and thrived for four hundred years in the rigorous climate of the St Lawrence valley. We need no sharper contrast than the one between a Canadian winter and the mild climate of coastal France.

Of all the races that have settled in the United States the one which has experienced the smallest climatic dislocation would be the Scandinavian. Between their original homes in northern Europe and their favorite habitat in our own middle Northwest climatic conditions show no great change. Yet even here it is probable that our Norse immigrants established themselves in the Dakotas and Minnesota primarily because these were the nearest areas of cheap land when Scandinavian emigration to this country set in.

Climate certainly was no deterrent in the case of the Puritan settlers when they exchanged the mild English sea climate for the rigorous winters of New England. On a smaller scale, but even more emphatic in degree, would be the Italian farm immigration into New England. Persistence of old habit asserts itself when Italian farmers in Connecticut built homes of heavy stone on the ancient model designed to keep out the heat of Italy's summer. The early immigrants from Germany in the middle of the nineteenth century established themselves in a typically non-German environment. They chose the treeless

plains of northern Missouri and Nebraska before turning to the more congenial Wisconsin with its trees and lakes. A particularly striking case would be the Portuguese at Gloucester and New Bedford and along Cape Cod. The Atlantic Ocean is a common feature of life on Cape Cod and life in the Azores, but otherwise one can imagine few sharper contrasts than that obtaining between the Azore lotus islands and the bleak winters of the New England coast.

The story of later migration into the United States, of Balkan races in the northern steel mills, of Central Europeans in the Pennsylvania and Illinois coal mines, shows climate brushed aside by livelihood. It is a movement from the farms into industry and urbanism, involving a break with ancient ways of life. Yet it is on record that these agricultural peoples did adapt themselves to a new tempo of existence in the mills and mines without physical deterioration, contrary to what one often hears. The health of the people in the mining camps and steel towns compares favorably with conditions in their European homes.

Finally we may take note of the largest wave of migration which this country has experienced since the bars were raised against European immigration in 1924. This is the great Negro exodus from the farms to the cities and, regionally, from the South to the North. The Negro population of the North in the space of twenty years preceding 1930 rose from about a million to nearly two and a half million and the larger part of the increase came after 1920. Negro mortality, always much higher than the white death rate, registered the effects of dislocation and overcrowding. In 1920 the infant death rate for Negroes in the cities was nearly twice as high as among the white urban population, and it was one quarter higher among urban Negroes than among rural Negroes. By 1935 the urban excess over the rural death rate among Negroes had tapered down to ten per cent. The health of the Negro immigrants in the cities of the North was better than in the urban South and was not far below conditions in the rural South. Once more there had been demonstrated the adaptability of men to environment.

It is not far short of ninety years since the area of the continental United States attained, in the Gadsden Purchase, its full growth of 3,026,789 square miles. The authorities at Washington have declined to take cognizance of the inroads of the ocean tides on the territory of the republic to the extent of several hundred square miles a year. Winter

storms wash away beaches and make new land, but in the Federal census estimate the same area has been present since 1853.

But if the vertical erosion of our coasts is not a problem of the immediate future, the same cannot be said of horizontal erosion affecting the whole surface of the United States. This is the problem of our ravaged lands which has been the subject of so much agitated discussion in the last decade. Soil destruction has loomed large in the general asize of our misused natural resources. If the territory of a nation may be said to decrease with the shrinkage of its useful acres, then the figures on soil erosion often quoted would be equal to whole states and sections engulfed by the sea. An estimate by the chief of the Soil Conservation Service in March 1938 is representative of official Washington opinion. He testified before a Senate committee that erosion has completely destroyed fifty million acres of arable land. Another fifty million acres have already lost half their top soil. Still another one hundred million acres are perceptibly affected and in a final one hundred million acres the evil symptoms are discernible. Remembering that the whole land area of the United States is, roughly, two billion acres, that our farm acreage is less than one half this area or under a billion acres and that the cultivated area on our farms is again one half, or less than five hundred million acres, it would appear that soil exhaustion has completely destroyed ten per cent of our arable land and, in varying degree, threatens more than one half of all our land under cultivation. Taking only fifty million acres wholly destroyed, we have an area greater than all the farm lands in New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

High scientific authority supports the minimum figures on soil destruction which we have quoted. Beyond that point we enter the realm of vague definition and conjecture and, after a while, mass psychology. Conservation, reforestation, flood control, as problems in safeguarding the national heritage, go back at least to the beginning of the present century, but the temper and mood in which they were discussed after 1933 show a notable change from earlier times. We are prepared for a certain note of excitement in dealing with soil wastage by rain, flood and dust storm. In the past we have seen excitement and apprehension over the threatened exhaustion of our coal deposits. Later we had the threatened exhaustion of our oil wells. Today it would seem that our coal resources are good for several thousand years, and petroleum has been found in so many places that the danger seems much more remote.

After 1933 the peculiar intensity of panic over our depleted natural resources was due to a dominant mood of disillusion and despair about

our whole national record up to the first Roosevelt administration. It has been a state of mind which saw doom where previous generations saw problems and emergencies. The story of our excitement over drought and Dust Bowl between 1934 and 1938 is a striking example. England in the last decade of the nineteenth century was heavily visited by drought every year save two. We, ourselves, in calmer years have spoken of cycles of drought and rain as we have spoken, with good reason, of cycles of cold and warm seasons. But when the American temperament seizes hold of a Dust Bowl and weds it to a philosophy of anger at the past and fear of the future we get the Dust Bowl phenomenon of the years after 1933. It was a mood which substituted for the traditional conquest of a continent phrases like the ravaging of a continent and the raping of the soil and the pillaging of the forests and the gutting of the mines.

The truth of the matter was told before the peak of the Dust Bowl excitement by the distinguished geographer, Isaiah Bowman, in *The Pioneer Fringe*. It had become a common statement that the soil of the Dust Bowl in our arid High Plains along the hundredth meridian is blowing away as the result of forty years of plowing by a greedy farmer folk; whereas the land should have been allowed to remain in short grass pasture. Actually, the dust in the Dust Bowl was blowing away at the beginning of cultivation fifty years ago. Dr Bowman's story of the occupation of the Texas Panhandle sounds the drought note very early. The farmers began coming into the country in 1887 and the drought set in heavily in 1892. It lasted four years and reached disastrous proportions. It was this drought of the early nineties, bearing down heavily on the High Plains, that helped to bring on the rising of the West under William J. Bryan, even as it helped to give us the rising of the Populists twenty-five years earlier. Allan Nevins in *The Emergence of Modern America* is writing of the year 1873 when he says:

More disastrous than even the locusts were the recurrent droughts, which drove thousands of families in the more arid parts of the West back in utter dejection. Grimy prairie schooners crawled back East bearing the legend, "In God we trusted, in Kansas we busted."

In the arid nineties, according to Dr Bowman, it was not alone the farmers but the soil scientists, too, who lost heart. In the year 1900 appeared an elaborate study by the United States Geological Survey which could offer no promise for farming in the High Plains of Texas. Yet "it needed only a few years of normal rainfall to prove the agricultural worth of the High Plains and start a new settlers' movement." Between 1900 and 1910 the population of the Texas Panhandle increased

fourfold, from twenty-eight thousand to one hundred and twenty-five thousand.

It is not soil that counts, but rain. Given enough water and any soil may be made to produce. In the Pecos region a long period of drought brought about an exodus of settlers in 1903. Four years of rain after 1906 brought a new wave of immigration. Three years of drought from 1910 to 1912 sent many people in flight from the country. They returned with the rain. Another dry spell in 1918 sent them forth again.

It is the same story everywhere in the new pastoral and farming countries. The conquest of a region for agriculture is a succession of dreams and heartbreaks. Lord Bryce said of the Australian government that it was not leasing land to the settlers, but rainfall. In dry years grazing and cultivation become impossible. In wet years a profit can be made anywhere. Seven years of drought at the turn of the century, corresponding closely with England's and our own parched years, killed forty million sheep in New South Wales, two thirds of all the flocks. Two thirds of the wheat fell away. Then came the rains and a "marvelous recuperation." Wheat production increased sixfold. Cattle and horses doubled in three years.

In the Lake Eyre region in the heart of Australia the fair years alternate with ruin. The cycle swings from hundreds of miles of knee-deep grasses to a burned and dead land. On the coast of Peru it is one kind of land in rainy weather and another in dry. Out there they say, "*segun el temporal y la Providencia* [with the help of the weather and Providence]."

So it may well be that before many years the dust of the Dust Bowl will be laid by the rain and along with it the dogma of a raped and ruined and pillaged land. For the heart of the Dust Bowl problem is not in the arid plains of the Far West but in the philosophy of doom that took possession of our articulate classes after the economic collapse of 1929 and engendered a mood which described the past of the country in terms of spoliation and saw the future in darkest colors. In a time when it became commonplace to speak of exhausted industrial opportunity, exhausted employment and exhausted international trade, it was natural to stress our exhausted soil and wasted mineral wealth and raped forest wealth. With more normal times and tempers should come our former awareness of profit and loss, of ebb and flow, of cycles of rain and drought. American optimism can make a fertile land out of the desert, just as American low spirits can make a desert out of a few dry years. We must wait and see how much of the American soil has really blown away.

CHAPTER II

Frontiers

IN VIRTUALLY every serious piece of writing of the last two decades dealing with America's past or future or both we find mention of a doctrine whose implications are tremendous. It amounts to nothing less than the assertion that about the year 1890 the land and people of the United States ceased to be what they had been for nearly three hundred years. The year 1890 would thus be a turning point in our history compared to which even the War of the Revolution and the Civil War are minor phenomena. The thesis from which such startling conclusions may reasonably be drawn is the doctrine of the Frontier and its influence on American history.

The theory of the Frontier was formulated by the late Professor Frederick Jackson Turner as early as the year 1893 but it cannot be said to have won general recognition for another quarter of a century. The circumstances and the mood of the years following the World War were propitious. It was a time in which the national mind, like the thoughts of men in other countries, began to occupy itself with the end of old eras and the advent of new eras. In the Frontier theory we had more than a new page or a new chapter in the American story. It was a new volume and almost a new tale.

Professor Turner's epoch-making address before the American Historical Association at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 pointed out that in the preceding Federal census, that of 1890, a signal event had been noted for the first time in the American record. This was the virtual disappearance of the Fringe of Settlement which had been moving westward ever since white settlers arrived in what is now the United States. By 1890 the occupation of the national soil from the Atlantic to the

Pacific was sufficiently continuous and intensive to make the process complete. We could no longer speak of a pioneering stage anywhere in the country. The age of Free Land was over.

The doctrine of the Frontier, as developed by Professor Turner in later addresses and essays and by numerous writers after him, would make the existence of this westward-moving fringe of settlement the keynote of American history and the chief molding force of the national character and civilization. The traits and creeds which we think of as peculiar to the American people, its mobility or restlessness, its searching enterprise, its self-reliance, materialism, lawlessness and democracy were nurtured by the frontier. There was always in America a way of escape for the man who found himself discontented with the conditions of life in the older settlements. He could always pull out for the great unoccupied spaces beyond the horizon, and out of the limitless areas of free land carve out for himself a new portion and begin a new life. Within a few years after the settlement of Jamestown and Plymouth and Boston there was a frontier in America. In the North it began with the suburbs of Boston and it moved westward river by river from the Connecticut to the Columbia. Democracy, according to the doctrine of the Frontier, could not but flourish under such conditions. Men would not easily submit to the domination of wealth and class, which lost no time in making their appearance in the earliest settlements, if with ax and plow a man could hew a freeman's living for himself out of the virgin forest and prairie. The untamed spirit of the frontier, the energy and restlessness and lawlessness of the pioneer, flowed back and profoundly modified the conditions of life in the settled East. For that matter, the East itself, habituated from the first to think of the future of the nation as bound up with its westward expansion, reading in Manifest Destiny a decree for the conquest of a continent all the way to the Pacific, would bend to the spirit of the frontier even when on minor and temporary issues it fought the men of the frontier. But in 1890 there were no more Western lands to be conquered. The last frontier had disappeared.

It was the Federal census of 1890 that disclosed to Professor Turner the end of America's pioneering era and with it the advent of a new phase in our national history just half a century ago. But another set of 1890 census data, revelatory of another type of pioneering and another frontier, demands our attention. Even as the old Land Frontier passes over the brow of the hill and into history we are confronted with the swift expansion and forward surge of this other wave of settlement. It is the Frontier of Immigration.

2

A statistical table of immigrant arrivals in the United States since 1821, summed up by decades, tells its story almost at a glance. For the ten years ending with 1830 the newcomers are less than one hundred and forty-five thousand. Immigration in the sense in which later generations understood the thing did not really exist. The next decade, ending with 1840, has a different tale to tell. The newcomers are now six hundred thousand in number. The most distressful Ireland has ushered in mass immigration. What had been a trickle up to the first administration of Andrew Jackson became a tide by the end of his second administration and a flood in the next decade. In the ten years ending with 1850 the arrivals numbered more than one million seven hundred thousand. Ireland still furnished the great mass of refugees, almost one half of the whole number, but Germany with nearly four hundred and fifty thousand immigrants now looms big in the race. Germany takes first place in the next decade, 1851-60, with not much short of a million arrivals, though her margin over Ireland is a narrow one.

The total number of immigrants for this ten-year period ending on the eve of the Civil War is more than two million five hundred thousand, but already the rate of increase has noticeably slackened. The first big decade of the thirties has shown a fourfold increase. The next ten-year period of the forties brought a threefold increase. In the next decade the increase is only about fifty per cent, though in absolute numbers, as we have seen, the growth is formidable.

As we glance down our condensed immigration table over the period of forty years between 1840 and 1880, we get the impression of a flood past its peak, of a situation nearly stabilized. For three successive decades after 1850 the volume of immigration ranges between two million six hundred thousand and two million eight hundred thousand in round numbers. Then we come to the year 1890, and we are obviously in a new era. Thus:

1851-60—2,598,214

1861-70—2,314,824

1871-80—2,812,191

But:

1881-90—5,246,613

In the ten years ending with 1890 more immigrants entered the country than in the preceding twenty years. Thereafter the figures sum up a familiar story:

| | |
|-----------|------------|
| 1891-1900 | —3,687,564 |
| 1901-10 | —8,795,386 |
| 1911-20 | —5,735,811 |

The figures for 1890 were the first to signalize the onset of the "new" immigration which began very early in the 1880's and continued for more than forty years until the gates which had been swinging wide open to mass immigration for nearly a century were closed by the Restriction Act of 1924.

In the fifty years between 1881 and 1930 something like twenty-eight million immigrants entered the country. This is very nearly equal to the population of the United States at the outbreak of the Civil War. It is very nearly equal to one half the population of the country in the year 1890 when the frontier influence on the nation's history became stationary. In the year 1930 these arrivals of the preceding fifty years must have constituted, themselves and their descendants, a population of nearly thirty-five million souls, equivalent to more than one fourth of the population of the country.

3

Of that great multitude, in absolute numbers as well as in percentage, it may be said that it lived in a frontier civilization. The spirit of the frontier, as defined by Professor Turner and his successors for the westward-moving fringe which crossed a continent, is essentially the spirit of the frontier that sways the lives of nearly thirty-five million people living today on the Immigration Frontier.

We must note the differences before passing on to the deeper similarities. The westward march of the Land Frontier was carried out by the English-speaking settlers and allied north-European stocks who originally occupied the country or supplied its earlier immigration up to the year 1880. It is a movement of agricultural conquest. Its mainspring is, in fact, Free Land. It results in the establishment of a great agricultural civilization, and specifically a yeoman's civilization, answering to Thomas Jefferson's ideal. It is a farming civilization punctuated with many small towns, fewer large towns, still fewer great cities. In absolute numbers the urban population is large, but there is an overwhelming rural majority. As late as 1880 four out of every five Americans lived in places of

eight thousand inhabitants or less. The spiritual climate of the country is rural and small town.

The great mass of immigrants after 1880 came from Central, Southern and Eastern Europe. In racial stock they differ from their north European predecessors. In religion they are heavily Roman Catholic and Jewish. To be sure, race and religion have appeared in the American record from the beginnings. The greater distinction between new settlers and old is that the newcomers make their homes in the big cities of the East or crowd into the industrial and mining centers of the East and the Middle West. It is an urban and industrial population and, what is still more important, a proletarian population. The newcomers are wage earners, where the earlier pioneers were their own masters. The newcomers have no visible stake in the country. They embody, in short, that very condition of life from which the earlier pioneers fled to the free lands of the West. Compared with the yeoman on his acres, a free economic man, what kind of free man is this new immigrant of the city streets? His children born in this country are nevertheless brought up in these city streets and in the proletarian tradition. Where is the economic basis for the defense of the democratic tradition and the free, egalitarian spirit which the frontier did so much to nurture and exalt?

To the extent then that people have brought together in discussion the pioneers of the old Land Frontier and the pioneers of what we have called the new Immigrant Frontier of the last fifty years, it has been done commonly to draw the contrast between the two. It has been a disparity so striking that seemingly the bare facts needed only to be stated to make a case. For we are now considering the influence of the frontier on the salient American qualities of courage, initiative, self-reliance and impatience of control—qualities that we may sum up under the single head of Manhood and that we accept as basic conditions for the preservation of democracy. On the face of things what comparison can there be in respect to hardihood and self-reliance between the men who for nearly three hundred years carried the fringe of settlement into the wilderness and the immigrants who in the last fifty years have crowded into the established security of our great cities and industrial centers? What would there be in common between the Daniel Boone pioneer who could not endure to see the smoke of a neighbor's chimney and the New American type which herds together by hundreds in the same city tenement, by thousands on the same city block, by the half million in the same city? What would there be in common between the pioneer woman who braved the wilderness with her man, facing danger and privation, facing toil and loneliness, bearing her children in a sod hut on

the windswept and sun-baked plains without the ministrations of doctor or even of woman neighbors—this Pioneer Mother of a poignant tradition rooted in fact, what would she have in common with the immigrant mother who at any time in the last fifty years has come to make a new home in the snug environment of our industrial civilization?

It should not be necessary to enlarge on the familiar theme. Yet there is one more point which has often been stressed but which will bear repetition because it so completely sums up the antithesis. What can there be in common, it has been asked, between the inner urge that drove forward the builders of the Land Frontier and the inert masses of Europe whom only the high-pressure salesmanship of the transatlantic shipping companies recruited in every city, town and village of the Continent? In the earlier pioneer, moving of his own free will, we have the prime raw material for the making of freemen. In the peasant populations of Europe whom our press-gang methods wrenched out of an ancient environment and deposited on our shores, we have had the making of docile factory and mine labor, but whether of freemen, is much more doubtful.

Such is the contrast as commonly drawn. Let us now look a little beneath the surface of things, or rather beneath the surface of phrases; and it may be that we shall discover between the new Immigration Frontier and the old Land Frontier resemblances as well as contrasts; and perhaps even striking resemblances. It may even be that the similarities outweigh the contrasts. Between the two frontiers the differences we have noted are impressive, but the things which the two frontiers have in common may be the essence of what we have learned to call the pioneering spirit.

The procedure is simple. If we think of the frontier in terms only of Free Land and a sturdy yeomanry defending with rifle in hand, if need be, its manhood rights against the encroachments of wealth and class, then obviously there are differences to be noted between the old Land Frontier and the new Immigration Frontier. There are notably different consequences, perhaps vitally different consequences, to be anticipated. Karl Becker has said that if American ideals and institutions are the result of a primitive way of life, then America as we have known it up to now is only a passing phase of social evolution.

We get a different answer if we look for the essence of the frontier not in free land but in freedom of movement and a new start in life. The meaning of the frontier would then be elbow room, movement, ventilation, aeration. From the old frontier came a current of air that kept the whole national atmosphere sweet. The decisive influence was not the

character of the frontier, but the mere fact that there was a frontier. There was something beyond the horizon.

In this sense our Immigration Frontier answers to the essential definition of frontier. It supplies elbow room, movement, expansion. Only the direction of movement differs. The old frontier lay horizontally ahead. The new frontier lies vertically ahead. It is the theory of the old frontier that there could be no stagnation in American life while always there were great numbers of Americans on the move to freer and richer horizons. But at no time in the history of the old frontier were there so many millions of men engaged in building a freer and fuller life on free land as there are immigrant millions today, newcomers and their offspring, engaged in building a freer and fuller and richer life in the cities, in the mills and mines and factories and shops and offices.

Nearly thirty-five million Americans of the New Immigration after 1880 are now living in an environment so much freer than the one which they left behind in Europe, or their parents before them, amidst opportunities so much richer and fuller, enjoying rights so little known in the old country, that for them the new life is in a very real sense a free frontier existence. It is the old theme of Opportunity, which it unquestionably requires courage to mention after a decade of economic depression. More than ever one is tempted to leave Opportunity for the use of the hardier type of Fourth-of-July orator. Yet on the record it stands that Opportunity was the thing which people once sought and found on the old frontier of free land and Opportunity is what the new Immigration Frontier offered to a huge multitude. Indeed we might go further. Comparing the conditions left behind them by the two kinds of pioneer with new conditions attained, it may very well be that the gains on the Immigration Frontier have been bigger than those registered by the pioneer on the Land Frontier.

4

Nearly thirty million immigrants entered the country in the half-century after 1880. They were brought here mainly by the economic motive. Many of them came here to be free, but the overwhelming number came here to prosper. How was it with the original pioneers who carried the frontier across the American continent? Many of them moved into the wilderness because they wanted to be free; we have spoken of Daniel Boone. From the beginning the West lured the restless and the adventurous; but here, too, the great mass of settlers moved into the wilderness under the urge of economic pressure and economic lure. This thing is, of course, summed up in the very core and kernel of the

Frontier story; it was the lure of free land. The pioneers did not want that land to hunt and fish over like Boone, or even to trap over like the advance guard of the fur hunters. They wanted to seize the wilderness and make an end of it. Primarily they wanted to make a living out of Kansas and Nebraska and out of Oregon and California, even as the men of the New Immigration wanted to make a living out of New York garment factories and Pittsburgh steel mills and Pennsylvania coal mines and, in the latest phase, out of Detroit automobiles and Akron rubber.

Glamour attaches to the remoter past. There we clearly discern and readily honor the heroic element which enters into all human effort and trial. It is not so easy to discern the same heroic quality in the present. It is correct enough to speak of epics and sagas of the Frontier in the century between the birth of the nation in 1789 and the end of free land in 1890. The grandchildren and the great-grandchildren may well look back with pride and piety to the forefathers who wrought so well in the conquest of a continent. But it seems plain that a hundred years from today the great-grandchildren of the Immigration Frontier will look back with very much the same feeling to their own forebears. They, too, will have a tale of pioneer risks and pioneer toil, of a status won at a price and of contributions made to America for value received.

To say that the earlier pioneers hewed their fortunes out of the wilderness solely with their own pain and sweat is somewhat to overstate the case. There was, after all, this free land which Government freely bestowed. On the other hand, there were no gratuities awaiting the later immigrant who settled in the big cities and the mill towns. He had only his labor to sell, and his chances of failing to find work were as high in the average as the chances of the Western settler to lose his crop. Unemployment versus drought and tornado and locusts—who shall say that the city immigrant during the first half-dozen years of his sojourn had greater security than had the farmer on his Western lands? To be sure, the immigrant in distress had neighbors to turn to, but the Western farmer, too, had his neighbors. The pioneer's loneliness has been exaggerated. The loneliness of the city immigrant has been usually overlooked, though social welfare workers are very well acquainted with the feeling of isolation and drift which beset the older generation of immigrants, cut off at the same time from their native land and from their own Americanized children or American-born children in the new land.

If, then, we set out to look for resemblances instead of differences between the pioneers who made the frontier up to the year 1890 and the immigrant stocks of the last half-century living on a frontier of their own, it is the likeness and not the contrasts that will weigh down the

scale. The force that uprooted them from their respective homes was basically the same, hope of economic betterment and the desire to escape oppressions of various kinds—social, political, religious. In both instances the emigration was largely stimulated. Friends who had gone ahead wrote back from Kansas to Massachusetts after 1850, just as they wrote back from New York's East Side to Poland and Jugoslavia after 1880. The steamship companies, in co-operation with American employers eager for cheap labor, recruited over a large part of Europe; but this practice antedates the new immigration after 1880. The railroad companies did some very active recruiting in our own East for settlers on their Western lands. The heavy German immigration to America in the early part of the eighteenth century was greatly stimulated by the recruiting activities of the shipowners of the time. The settlement of America from the very beginnings is in very considerable part a story of high-pressure immigration.

So the parallel runs. If the bolder and more restless American spirits once flocked westward to the frontier, it was also the more enterprising element in the European population that contributed most of the immigrants, even as today it is the more enterprising boys and girls who leave the farm. It was no mean undertaking for the Central European peasant to leave his village and its immemorial life for a strange land three thousand miles away across the sea to settle amidst people of a foreign tongue and foreign customs. The spiritual adventure could hardly have been as great for the older American pioneer who left his Ohio home to take up a farm in Wisconsin, or for the New England farmer group which settled in Kansas. Just how sharp a break was it for the father of Abraham Lincoln to migrate from Hardin County, Kentucky, to Spencer County, Indiana, and thence to Macon County, Illinois?

One test of the essential uniformity characterizing the migrations of the American people, the old pioneer type and the new alike, is a close family likeness in the pattern of pioneer behavior. We may here set down only the heads of discourse. They are obviously open to elaboration and in their proper place will be so developed elsewhere in this book.

1. Lawlessness, and particularly an exceptionally high homicide rate. This was true of the old frontier with its traditional gun-play. Every man was his own law-enforcement agent until the growth of population brought in the reign of law and order. In our newer immigration we find an increase in lawlessness, not among the original immigrants, but among their native-born children. This arises partly from a collapse of parental authority. It might be called a disease of adolescence which attacks the children of the foreign-born before they find themselves.

2. Women's Rights. The high status of women in new communities would be due primarily to their scarcity value as well as to the more conspicuous economic role which they play under primitive conditions. To be sure it is not hard for us nowadays to see that the most retiring of housewives in the most conservative of environments is an economic factor of the very first importance. But this truth still needs to be pointed out and popularized, whereas the thing is obvious in the case of the pioneer mother and wife. Whatever the underlying reason, our American doctrine of sex equality has gone beyond conceding equality to woman and conferred on her a privileged status. It is so much in the air that peasant women from Eastern Europe in one way or another have managed to discover, even before their ship has reached New York harbor, that America is the land of Ladies First. For the older immigrant women, the principle may sometimes halt in the application. The younger women enter on their high heritage without loss of time.

3. Schools. The immigrant finds the public schools waiting for his children when he lands here. The pioneers of the Land Frontier had to build their own school houses and did it as quickly as they built their churches. The immigrant very soon learned that in America the younger children belong in school, though it is quite true that child labor in the country showed an increase in the earlier years of the mass immigration which set in fifty years ago. Children worked hard on the Immigration Frontier as on the Land Frontier. It is worth noting that child labor today, to the extent that it survives, is found chiefly on the farm and in related occupations.

We have seen, then, that from the beginning of American history this country has been a frontier in a double sense. It has been a physical frontier and a functional frontier. There has been the actual frontier of virgin land to be occupied and settled and exploited; the cutting edge, as Professor Paxson called it, which started westward in 1607 and stopped in 1890; we may call this the horizontal frontier. There is the other, the vertical frontier; the cutting edge driven upward through Opportunity by the efforts of vast numbers of foreign-born determined to raise themselves in the world. The story of the Covered Wagon and the Winning of the West is the first kind of frontier. The transformation of scores of millions of European immigrants into American citizens, involving their ascent to a higher economic level than they knew at home, is the second kind of frontier.

Both types actually resolve themselves into one. We may call it Mobility. We may call it Opportunity. It has been the chief factor in American life. Because this nation entered in 1929 on a period of trial

and despondency it seems both reckless and archaic to speak of Opportunity in American life. But whatever the future may hold for this nation we cannot in deference to the current mood or current fashion wipe out the past. Our past is the record of a continent with plenty of room and air for all sorts and conditions of men. From the beginning America has been in this double sense the land of the great open spaces where men are men. Only, as we have seen, these open spaces need not be three thousand miles of forest and prairie and plain and mountain. There were great open spaces over the sidewalks of every large city where the children of the newer foreign-born might find the freedom and the opportunities that the children of the older immigrants and of the native stock found in the ever-shifting land frontier.

The stress laid here on the immigrant population of the last fifty years must not be taken to mean that we are thinking of the American people as divided into two camps, or of Americans as made up of two kinds. The purpose has been only to delve a little more deeply into this question of the Frontier. Far from subscribing to any fundamental differences manifested in the original pre-1820 stock, the pre-1880 Old Immigration and the post-1880 New Immigration, it is our thesis that from the beginning this has been one people by various tests; but chiefly by this test, that all Americans for more than three hundred years have been moving forward to the conquest of new frontiers of many kinds.

5

In the spring of 1935 Bronson Cutting, a senator from New Mexico and an ardent supporter of President Roosevelt, perished in an airplane accident. Like his political associate and neighbor, Isabella Greenway, representative from Arizona, this member of a distinguished New York family belonged to the rapidly growing class of health immigrants which in recent years has been discovering the arid Southwest. Together with the health-artist colonies in Sante Fe and elsewhere they have been giving us a new frontier—health, art, sport and vacation land—on the high mesas of New Mexico and in desert Arizona. And in this newest Southwest we have one more frontier in the endless succession of new lands that America seems destined to furnish.

We may look with greater detail into this parade of internal frontiers during the fifty years that have elapsed since the vanishing of the free land frontier in 1890. These internal frontiers lack the sweep and continuity of America's first great march into the open, but within their more limited scope the new frontiers answer to the basic definition. They offer

the basic requirements of a frontier—elbow room, opportunity and prosperity in varying degree. They draw population. They exhibit the zest and turmoil of rugged individualism at its ruggedest.

1. The Oklahoma-Texas Oil Frontier. It sprang up in the former state about the year 1905 and in Texas perhaps half a dozen years later. We do not mention California oil which in the years before the great crash of 1929 won a close race with Oklahoma for second place after Texas; for in California the new petroleum horizon opened up about the same time as a still greater vista—the motion-picture frontier. Hollywood's frontier has overshadowed California oil. Texas and Oklahoma in 1910 produced less than one third of all the petroleum in the country. Ten years later they were producing more than half. In 1933 they accounted for two thirds of the nation's output, with California supplying most of the remainder. The impact of sudden riches on Oklahoma was reflected in the phenomenon of millionaire Indians. Members of the Osage tribe at one time drew thirty-six million dollars a year in oil royalties and up to 1933 the tribe had received a total income of two hundred and forty-four million dollars. Aged Indian braves riding about in luxurious automobiles sum up the Oklahoma frontier at its height.

2. The California motion-picture frontier is best reflected in the growth of Los Angeles and the surrounding region. Motion pictures went hand in hand with oil and climate. California gained nearly a million people in the decade after 1900, more than a million after 1910, more than two million after 1920. The climate drew the famous migration of "Iowa" farmers, which really means retired elderly and moderately prosperous folk from all the United States; and there came, with a leisured people, the cults and extravagances in social, economic and philosophic ideas associated with the climate of southern California.

3. The Arizona-New Mexico Frontier already mentioned.

4. The Florida Frontier. The discovery of a new desire and the establishment of a new level of living for the American people are recorded in the conquest of the winter vacation by the masses. The great Florida boom of 1925 and the crash of the next year, leaving devastation behind, belong in the old American succession of peaks and panics by which the country has moved along. The winter of 1937-38 saw an estimated one and three quarter million winter tourists in Florida, and though the glory of the old 1925 days was still far to seek, recovery was noticeable. In any case, it was demonstrated that the winter holiday habit had come to stay; possibly as one of the new "industries" for which the country in the great tribulation after 1929 scanned the sky to bring back prosperity.

5. On a smaller scale we have a new frontier in New England as a

summer vacation land, and, secondly, as a new farm region for Italian and Polish immigrants.

6. The Automobile Frontier, of which we speak elsewhere in detail.

We may stop to note two of the frontiers that we have just catalogued as vividly present in the newspapers of the same day in March 1937. The story of the destruction of the New London Consolidated School, in northeastern Texas, by a gas explosion which took more than four hundred young lives had precedence for a time over the story of the sit-down strike in the Detroit factories of the Chrysler Motor Company. In the Texas catastrophe we see the oil frontier which has oscillated in the last generation back and forth across half the continent between Louisiana and California, with its latest advance in East Texas. The central high school building in New London was said to have cost one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars and it stood in a forest of oil derricks. It was the richest and very nearly the grimmest rural school district in the country. The big consolidated school, serving a school area one third as large as New York City, sprang up with the new oil field itself, which in this section was only three years old in the spring of 1937. New London was so new that it did not appear on the maps and was not listed among the Government post offices. The reporters described it as a typical mining town, well provided with places of amusement to absorb the surplus earnings of a frontier population. The saloons and gambling places were part of a settled civilization, for there are women and children, too, on this new East Texas frontier, and spacious high schools. But the essentials of the old Frontier are here—opportunity for enrichment, the gambling spirit and the democracy of the public school. The children of the well-drillers and the truck-drivers and the office clerks and the highly paid company officials sat side by side in the ill-fated school at New London, Texas.

Of greater national moment was the news, that March day in 1937, from the biggest of America's new frontiers—the Automobile Frontier with its capital at Detroit. Six thousand men in the Chrysler factories are conducting a sit-down strike. They are imitating the example of the General Motors workers in Flint some weeks earlier. They are encouraged no doubt by the peaceful agreement reached with such astonishing speed in the major steel industry. Nervous people speak of revolution as the governor of Michigan makes it clear that he will not employ force to evict the sit-down invaders. The sheriff of Wayne County says he lacks the deputy officers to enforce a court injunction against the strikers ordering them to evacuate the Chrysler plants. In the United States Senate the situation is solemnly debated, and the illegal nature of the

sit-down strike is acknowledged. Yet both Michigan senators stand with the governor in rejecting the use of force, although Senator Vandenberg, Republican, says that if the sit-down habit should spread these United States will disintegrate in sixty days. Actually he is refuted by the spirit of the Detroit strikers; for in their words and acts there speaks out, not the Class War, but the spirit of the Frontier.

Detroit is the newest of American industrial cities. Between 1910 and 1930 it stormed its way up from ninth place among American cities to fourth, overtaking and passing in its upward rush Boston, St Louis, Cleveland, Baltimore and Pittsburgh, and adding to its original population of four hundred and sixty-six thousand another one million, one hundred thousand. This was almost as big a gain as Chicago rolled up in the same twenty-year period and Chicago started in 1910 with a population nearly five times as large as Detroit. It is a record of growth only matched, and slightly bettered, by Los Angeles; and the symptoms of a pioneer civilization in Los Angeles need hardly be discussed. The California climate drew to itself those who came to live as well as those who came to work and consequently the industrial character has not dominated southern California. The pioneer extravagances of California have manifested themselves largely in the field of ideas.

But in the case of Detroit as of Los Angeles we must distinguish between the spirit of the Frontier and the spirit which we may variously describe as radicalism, social unrest or revolution. Detroit, as we have seen, was following the example set by Flint in adopting the sit-down strike, and Flint in turn was following, after a long interval, the example of Akron, Ohio, where the sit-down strike as a new industrial technique was first tried out. Flint and Akron grew even faster than Detroit in the period between 1910 and 1930. Both cities grew more than fourfold, but they drew much less heavily than Detroit on foreign immigration. The foreign-born in Akron were about one eighth of the population, but in Detroit they were more than one quarter of the population.

Detroit's foreign-born population cannot, then, be the reason for the up-flare of industrial restlessness. The majority of the foreign-born belong to the older North European immigration with its reputed sense of sobriety and social responsibility. The newer immigrants from Southern, Central and Eastern Europe constitute only ten per cent of the population of Detroit. In cities where the later arrivals form a much larger part of the population the militant industrial methods of the Michigan automobile workers did not find favor. In New York and Chicago, under "liberal" mayors, the police did not hesitate to deal summarily with the sit-down strikers. To be sure, numbers and cohesion must be taken into

account and the relatively compact body of automobile strikers in Flint and Detroit was a more difficult problem to handle. Yet the fact remains that neither New York nor Chicago saw demonstrations by the new Industrial unions on anything like the Michigan scale. In its turn, Detroit affords an example of moderation when compared with smaller places like Flint with its much larger old-stock native population. In November 1937 Detroit elected a conservative mayor and city council by a crashing majority over the candidates supported by the Committee on Industrial Organization. Such an outcome was all the more impressive because it followed upon predictions earlier in the summer of a possible test of physical force between radical labor and various anti-union elements. The threats of kidnaping, tar and feathering and deportation were much more in the authentic American vigilante tradition than were the wilder rumors of barricade fighting and an armed Fascist march upon Washington. Even in the tenth year of the great depression, the violence one had reason to expect was the traditional American violence exemplified in the experience of Minneapolis. In that city a long period of Farmer-Labor control, marked by many acts of criminal terrorism, was brought to an end by an uprising of good citizens and the election of a conservative mayor who had served four terms in that office before 1929.

Michigan, therefore, in the troubled months after the 1936 presidential election presents us once more with a situation which obtains for the country as a whole and for our whole national history. The great majority of the new-stock population in the cities is conservative, whereas radicalism is chiefly native and agrarian. The new workers from the Appalachian hill country who bulk so large in the Michigan factories are so fresh from the soil that it is really the agrarian mentality we are dealing with in a city strike. Another name for it would be the Spirit of the Frontier.

CHAPTER III

Life, Livelihood and Law

RUDYARD KIPLING in his Autobiography, which first appeared in the columns of the *New York Times* in the early months of 1937, lashes out in one place against America in a manner that can only be called savage. He is visiting Canada, and he finds himself marveling again at the political frontier which divides "Safety, Law, Honor and Obedience" in Canada from "frank brutal decivilization" in the United States. This was the year 1907, and it is hard to think what episode in our American record for that year impelled the mature Kipling to pass a much bitterer and more unjust verdict on us than the young Kipling did thirteen years earlier. Then it was the famous picture of the American possessed by "the cynic devil in his blood that bids him flout the Law he makes, that bids him make the Law he flouts." But there is praise, too, for the American as a man who dares to match with Destiny for beers and it is high praise, of course, when Kipling with rare understanding sums up the American as one who "turns a keen untroubled face home to the instant need of things." Compared with this sustained analysis the curt damnation of America as "frank brutal decivilization" is a puzzle; for, as we have intimated, the year 1907 could have had no such ugly reminders for Kipling as the year 1894, with the Pinkerton shootings at Homestead and the Italian lynchings in New Orleans still fresh in memory and our Venezuela quarrel with England in the brewing. But even more puzzled was Kipling himself by the behavior of the Canadian people. With such a contrast in civilization north and south of the forty-ninth parallel, he could not understand why the Canadians "should be impressed by any aspect whatever of the United States."

Law, safety, honor and obedience are touchstones of civilization, and,

in particular, the first two. Where the law breaks down and life becomes unsafe we might well argue that civilization does not exist. It may be that Kipling's views on America in 1907 were shaped in some degree, when he came to writing down his recollections, by events of 1932-37; by the tragedy of the Lindbergh child and the flight of his parents to England for security and the riot of kidnappings and child slayings that broke out in the news. Have we civilization when parents send their children away to school in Europe in fear of kidnapers as American parents did at the time?

And yet it is not at all hard to understand why the Canadians, to Kipling's amazement and disgust, should find things to approve in the American record. Substitute for law and safety as the rule of civilization the Dangerous Life so frequently advocated for the individual. Then we have a whole American nation dedicating itself to the Dangerous Life; matching with Destiny for beers; proud of its ability to turn a keen untroubled face to the instant need of things. Poets and novelists never tire of showing how in the heart of quiet, disciplined men the wild bird will suddenly call. The loyal soldier of humble duty envies the undisciplined man his freedom and his hazards; and particularly is this true if with the adventure there are the golden profits; with the glory there is the loot. Canadians are probably impressed by the turbulent American life to the south of them because its rewards are in many aspects so much richer than their own.

We may take one example. Shortly after Kipling's Canadian visit in 1907 Charles W. Eliot was speaking of popular education in the United States. President Eliot said that we must not be content with progress so far made in the public schools. Only when the current annual expenditure of seventeen dollars for every child, he said, has been multiplied four or five times shall we have reason to boast. A leading Socialist writer of the time, quoting President Eliot with approval, said that such a program no doubt would cost billions of dollars, but we must not shrink from the task. In less than twenty years the thing had come to pass. In the year 1930 the outlay on public schools in the United States was nearly two and a half billion dollars, or almost six times the expenditure in 1910. The cost for every pupil in seventy-five large cities in 1932 was one hundred and eighteen dollars, or seven times President Eliot's figure. About the year 1907 in Canada the school enrollment was proportionally as high as in the United States and the per capita expenditure even a bit higher. Twenty years later the per capita school expenditure in Canada had risen to three times against six times in the United States. The difference was due to an outlook and a set of material conditions on the

"decivilized" side of the international boundary which could not but arouse envious thoughts on the other side.

On this whole question of American violence and the American way of life we are driven to recall that law and order are not the exclusive test of a civilization, or we must dismiss some of the most impressive civilizations of all time. Life was not placid in the Greek democracies, or among the Italian city republics of the Middle Ages—where human life had little value indeed—or in Shakespeare's England, as attested by the annual hangings in the courts. And while it is true that America so far has not given the world compensation for lawlessness in the coin of Phidias, Da Vinci and Shakespeare, it has offered compensation in other human values, not all of them in the material sphere. The United States, for instance, provided a host of readers for Rudyard Kipling. Much British criticism of America has been due to personal grievances. The critics have often been writers whose books were pirated by American publishers. It was the case with Charles Dickens a century ago, and Rudyard Kipling says that his publishers estimated his losses from the copyright pirates at perhaps half of all his earnings in America. Yet those earnings were enormous; and even about a pirated edition one imagines an author must speak with mixed feelings; he is robbed, but he is read. A nation that devours an author as America has devoured and worshiped Kipling can scarcely remain in his permanent thoughts an uncivilized nation. It was not quite decivilization when Rudyard Kipling lay gravely ill with pneumonia in New York in 1899 and the streetcar conductors inquired of their passengers how Kipling was getting on. It is the ancient problem of how to define civilization.

2

A basic American trait combines a strong disregard for human life with a profound reverence for the right to make a living. The inalienable right to a livelihood is exemplified in the matter of the newspapers and personal privacy. The newspaper reporter of the lowest type is permitted to invade the birth chamber, the bridal chamber and the death chamber, so that he may hold his job and climb to a better one. It must be a very crusty and very exceptional victim of newspaper attention who will fail to yield to the double argument that the public has a claim on him and that the reporter has a claim on him. The reporter has been told by his editor to come back with a story, a picture, or both, or make place for someone who can bring them in; and not many Americans would think of coming between a man and his living. A classic jest has

to do with the endless things which the good-natured American public will buy to help the young salesman work his way through college. In a very real sense that is the prevalent attitude in every sphere of the national life. We are all working our way through college and only a very churlish and undemocratic American will refuse to help any man engaged in trying to help himself.

How far does this fraternal instinct run? Very far indeed. We have just said that no true American will refuse to take trouble to help another man make an honest living. This charitable attitude often extends to pursuits and occupations that may fall something short of being honest in the eyes of a rigid moralist or in the eyes of a socially minded person. It is a state of mind which enters vitally into the whole problem of American lawlessness. It runs all the way from the small shopkeeper who violates a minor city ordinance which he finds troublesome, to the big business corporation which suborns legislatures and corrupts municipal politics in quest of special privilege. It is a tolerance which extends, unconsciously no doubt, to the gangster and the racketeer. The members of the underworld, too, are engaged in making a living, and a rather hazardous living at that.

The racketeer and his employee, the gangster, where these two functions are not combined in the same person, are the product of many forces in American life, often conflicting, not all of them maleficent. The basic factor is the national tradition of violence which resolves itself, as we shall see further down, in a national tradition of short cut and speed. The gangster and racketeer thrive on the strong predilection of an individualist people for enacting unenforceable laws—"that bids him flout the Law he makes, that bids him make the Law he flouts," words written twenty-five years before the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment. Corrupt local government rests in great measure on the innocent belief, or the general pretense, that prostitution, gambling and drinking can be suppressed by being formally outlawed. The inevitable result is protection money paid to police authorities and their superiors for the privilege of being let alone. This is the essence of racketeering except that the protective function is now exercised by private persons instead of by the police, though by no means independently of the political powers behind the police. In the second place, racketeering is an extension of the protective principle to law-abiding citizens and lawful pursuits. Originally the prostitute, the gambler and the liquor-law violator paid to be let alone. The racketeer has laid toll on honest businessmen and workingmen. He exacts a fee for permitting employers to employ and workers to work.

And yet that is not the whole story. The racketeer is predominantly a parasite, but he is not all parasite. In debased, distorted form he exemplifies the American passion for organization and centralization and stabilization and—odd though it may sound—for order. It is a paradox that the highest expression of American lawlessness, the racketeer-gangster, does in part represent a striving toward law and order in the economic life, or at least a retreat from anarchy. In the fall of 1938 and again in the following winter New York saw a prominent Tammany district leader brought to trial and convicted for extending protection to a gambling syndicate which conducted large operations among the poorer people of the city under the headship of a recently deceased notorious racketeer and gangster chieftain. It was brought out in the course of the trial that the humble patrons of this “numbers” game fared better at the hands of the racketeer combination than under the preceding regime of competition among many small gambling enterprises. Loot was no doubt the principal cause that led the racketeer Napoleon to seize control of the “numbers” business, but he did introduce a certain measure of stability. He gave, in a very unconventional form to be sure, Service.

It would be unfair, then, to say that there is popular sympathy anywhere for the racketeer as outlaw; but in some degree there is unconscious acceptance of the racketeer as a man engaged in making a living and even performing a function of sorts. It is a regrettably mistaken way of earning a livelihood, but live a person must. The morals of the problem are clear enough when we come down to the hired killers employed by the racketeer chieftains to remove business rivals, but ethics tend to lose their sharp outline as we move upward out of the definite underworld into twilight zones and no man’s lands. The popular conscience will not bear down too hard on the businessman who in the legitimate tradition sets out to control the Kosher poultry trade in New York, or the artichoke business or the steam laundry industry in a particular section of the city. That business shall strive to become bigger business and Big Business is the law of American life. If control is good for steel and oil and railroads, it is good for poultry, artichokes and the family wash. If the progress of such business consolidations is marked by occasional crude methods, either moral or physical, that, too, is not unknown in the history of American business.

The doubtful phase begins when the ambitious poultry trader sets out to harass his competitors by methods that will hardly pass for shrewd business procedure. The politicians will be invoked to make trouble for a rival by letting loose on him the various agencies of government in the guise of law enforcement. The Health Department will discover viola-

tions of the sanitary code. The Building Department will discover fire hazards. The Police Department will take steps against obstructed sidewalks and illegally parked trucks. It is a decisive step downward when the competitors for power begin to practice their own violence by hiring men to cut the tires on rival trucks and disable the engines and bring about unfortunate collisions. Such methods the public conscience will not approve, but it will not yet rise to a white heat of indignation. The methods are not without precedent. They entered into the building of some of America's greatest industries.

The final step comes when business rivalry resorts to murder. The gangster chieftain is hired to remove a competitor, and he entrusts the task to his "trigger-men." The public conscience is shocked and the law steps in, often to exact the legal penalty. But even here the force of public indignation is weakened by the series of moral judgments we have enumerated, by the merging of the white of legitimate business into the nightmare black of hired murder. Responsibility for the last dire act is confused by all the earlier responsibilities. The drug addict who can be hired for the sum of twenty-five dollars to kill a man elicits pity and horror. He stands out as only one man in a system; but he is the end product in such a long chain of causation that the public mind grows wearied and confused before it has retraced the links of the chain to the beginning.

We see the process at work under Prohibition. The public conscience does not disapprove of the beer baron who operates a secret brewery or brings in his beer trucks from Canada. It does not disapprove of the politicians without whose connivance the beer baron could not function. Public opinion plainly does not regard as enemies of society the honest laboring folk who brew the beer and distribute it. The beer barons competing for the golden profits are still in the moral class. Only when the rival claimants for the beer trade send out armed men to terrorize each other's customers and to raid each other's factories and trucks does the public conscience become somewhat uneasy; but it is a question of public order and not of the moral law. Even when the beer chieftains mow each other down with machine guns the quarrel is so largely a trade quarrel that the public conscience is not greatly troubled. Assassinations in the course of a struggle for the control of the bootleg trade or the laundry trade are almost industrial accidents. Obviously the public attitude toward the gang wars would be wholly different if the victims of such business assassinations were peaceful citizens. This is not the case. The casualties are confined to the ranks of the racketeers and when one gang has succeeded in wiping out a rival gang with the aid of sub-

caliber guns and high explosives the inclination of the general public is to regard it as good riddance.

The racketeer in organized labor and industry best illustrates the complexity of a social problem whose psychological and moral implications we have made an attempt to grasp. Early in 1937 a special prosecutor in New York brought to trial, on a charge of conspiracy and extortion, the officials of a restaurant waiters' union and of a restaurant employers' association together with a number of professional racketeers and gangsters. A medley of relationships and motives and forces that almost defies analysis and frequently touches on the burlesque emerges from this court investigation into New York's restaurant industry. The weight of testimony would show that both organizations, of restaurant owners and of waiters, were racketeer creations. The employers' association was set up for the purpose of extorting large membership fees from the restaurant operators in return for protection, which meant immunity from labor trouble and from terrorization. The waiters' union was brought into being by racketeers for the rich pickings in membership dues and other perquisites. As time goes on the gangsters operating the two organizations have to face the challenge of hungry gangsters from the outside. The gangster czar of the employers' association and the gangster czar of the waiters' union naturally try to overreach each other, to "muscle in" on each other's rackets or spheres of enterprise; and the hired gunmen try to "muscle in" on both. There are periods of truce when the rival czars find it practicable to work together, most often under the auspices of a super-czar. At the time of the New York court trial the employers' organization and the waiters' union kept their funds in the same bank and hired the same chartered accountant whose services were recommended by the leading gangster figure in the case.

And yet it would be a mistake to suppose that it was wholly a case of industry terrorized by professional strong-arm men, or an employers' union and a waiters' union created, so to speak, out of the whole cloth. Both sides discern a real advantage even while they are being exploited. The restaurant owners expect to do business with the gangster czar of the waiters' union, who can guarantee stability in union policy. The owners get from their own czar a certain measure of real protection against the threat of labor violence. The members of the waiters' union bend their necks to the yoke of their own czar in return for a certain measure of genuine labor union activity in their behalf. It is a state of things for which a striking parallel, on a different plane, may be found in the history of the Italian cities five hundred years ago and their armies of hired professional soldiers. The *condottieri* of medieval Italy, like the Sforzas

in Milan, end by making themselves masters of the city. The same thing happens among Milan's hereditary enemies. The populations on both sides are partly terrorized and in part accept a strong leader who may give them victory in war. Within each city are new aspirants for power. Within each city are rival factions willing to buy aid from the outside. It is medieval Italy; it is ancient Greece with its fierce partisanship and weak patriotism.

Much nearer to us in place and time we see the racketeer's progress demonstrated in the hard-fought labor wars of the years immediately before and after the World War in the New York garment industry. Employers began by hiring private guards to protect their loyal workers against intimidation by picketers, or, as the union leaders charged, to intimidate the strikers. The strikers retaliated by putting their own strong-arm squads into the field. The next step came when rival factions in the labor union mobilized the "gorillas" against each other. In the last phase the hired bravos became, in some instances, the overlords of the small sweatshops which they were hired to protect, and, in a sense, actual producers in the garment industry. From this morass the garment industry succeeded in extricating itself and planting its feet on the solid ground of civilized industrial relations. It was a phase of banditti warfare repeated in some of Chicago's bitter internecine labor quarrels. Labor violence and labor killings are not always between employer and employee. There are labor civil wars.

Life was young and turbulent in the dawn of the Italian Renaissance, as it still is today in America, and the tradition of violence and lawlessness goes with youth. But in our own case lawlessness is reinforced by another tradition that at first sight is its denial. This is the American relish for organization and stabilization, even if it is organization imposed by a racketeer chieftain. The restaurant employers in New York found it more convenient to deal with a disciplined labor union than with an uncontrolled labor force. The passion for convenience, for labor-saving, is a national trait. Theatergoers will pay double and triple the box-office price for tickets to save themselves the trouble of shopping around. It is conniving at lawlessness, but it is speed and convenience.

3

Because the wars of the gangsters loom so large in the newspapers it does not follow that the gang feuds are primarily responsible for the high murder rate which has given us an evil eminence among civilized countries. The underworld slayings are certainly not the principal cause

and it is doubtful whether they weigh heavily in the final account. By the homicide test, human life in the United States is ten to twenty-five times cheaper than it is in England and five to ten times cheaper than it is in Canada. In the years before the Depression the murders in the United States were more than eighty for every million of the population against seven to the million in England and fifteen to the million in Canada, according to one authority. Other sources indicate for the years 1930-32 an average of one hundred and twenty murders a year in England and Wales with a rate of three per million of the population. New York City, with less than one fifth of the population, would have three to four times as many slayings as all of England and Wales and approximately twenty times as many as London, with about the same population in New York. In the year 1933 persons arraigned for murder in seven hundred and sixty-two American cities with an aggregate population of thirty million averaged sixty-three per million and the range was from eighty-five in cities of more than a quarter of a million people down to thirty in cities under twenty-five thousand inhabitants. Still other figures show in 1928-30 in American cities with more than one hundred thousand inhabitants an average of one hundred murders to the million of population.

One factor in our high murder rate is the colored population. In 1926 the homicide rate among Negroes was four hundred and fifty-four per million people against fifty-two for the white population, or nine times as high. This rate of fifty-two for the white population is already a perceptible drop from the nation-wide level of eighty-five to one hundred for the general population irrespective of race and color.

What of the foreign-born or foreign white stock of the newer immigration? There is reason for believing that in the first fifteen years of the present century, in the years before the World War, the newer strains did make their contribution to serious crime. This was the period in which immigrants entered the country at the rate of more than a million a year and in those years the homicide rate went up quickly. From approximately thirty-five homicides per million people in 1900 the rate went up to sixty-one in 1905 and eighty in 1910. Massachusetts homicides rose from forty per million in 1904-07 to one hundred per million in 1916 and then virtually flattened out at this level. In five cities, Buffalo, Baltimore, Chicago, Cleveland and St Louis, the homicide rate went up from twenty per million in 1900 to sixty in 1906, to one hundred and ten in 1917, to one hundred and forty in 1922 and flattened out.

It is arguable that with the inrush of millions of Europeans who found themselves torn from ancient habits and stabilities and planted in a new

environment, and especially in the case of their adolescent children, the crime rate in the cities would go up. As the inflow grew smaller and the earlier arrivals won better adjustment to the new life, the crime figures would rise much less rapidly and tend, after 1920, to remain on a general level.

But after all these two factors, a very high homicide rate among the Negroes and a higher than normal rate in the big cities, do not go to the heart of the problem. We may leave the Negroes entirely out of the reckoning and note that homicides among the white population, at, say, fifty per million people, would still be approximately ten times as high as that of England. This would be the homicide rate in our big cities in the year 1900 before the immigration tide had reached its peak. It would be approximately our relative homicide standing today after many years of drastically curtailed immigration. Plainly we have an ultimate force in operation that transcends local and special circumstances. We might even argue that a native trend toward violence will explain the high Negro homicide rates and lawlessness among the second generation of the foreign-born rather than be explained by them. If we take it that something in the spirit or tradition of the country impels men to hold human life lightly, then we can very well see how an underprivileged group like our colored people would be less qualified, because of its economic, social and educational status, to exercise restraint on primitive impulses. In lesser degree this would be true of the immigrant. The newcomers are molded by the general temper and behavior of the country which is their new home. If they find free-and-easy gun-play an established American institution, they will embrace it ardently, together with other American customs.

Criminologists say that our high murder rate is largely due to the national practice of carrying firearms, and they cite the fact that three out of every four homicides in the country are perpetrated with such weapons. But this again fails to go deep enough. Why is it the general habit here to carry firearms while in England even the police are as a rule restricted to the wooden club or "life-preserver"? The answer obviously is that pioneer habits have survived the passing of pioneer conditions. That primitive past is really such a short way behind us that our thinking and, more than that, our unreasoned responses are of the pioneer type. Our instincts in the matter of law enforcement are largely those of the mining camp and the vigilante committee. We are slow in normal, humdrum law enforcement but rally with enthusiasm to crime drives, just as in many other fields we prefer the drive or crusade method. In such a mood the police commissioner of New York City will order his

men to go out after the big racketeers and to "muss 'em up"; in other words, he is inculcating the riot technique and the third-degree method which foreigners consider a strange way to promote a general respect for law and order. By now the third degree has become familiar enough to the peoples of Europe. It is established practice in the postwar European dictatorships, where it covers the entire range of terror from physical beatings and mental tortures to summary death by "purge." These are emergency methods. They go with an exceptional status which avowedly cannot afford the luxury of the normal processes of law and order.

The emergency temper of the mining camp and the frontier persists in America. In the occupation of a new continent the musket and the rifle were indispensable colonizing tools. Upon the original firearm habit was superimposed the frontier habit of impromptu law enforcement by the individual law officer or the group. The vigilante tradition survives in the armored cars so frequently employed in mature and metropolitan New York to convey pay rolls through the streets. Our people do go so far as to remark occasionally, with curiosity and a perfunctory expression of regret, that in London they send wagonloads of currency and bullion through the streets without special police protection, let alone the artillery-cum-tank effects which we achieve. Perhaps we sigh at the Arcadian conditions under which London bank deposits and pay rolls move through the streets, but such things are not for us with our gangsters and bandits and general lawlessness. Yet it is obviously a vicious circle. Armored cars and guards with pistols in their hands as a routine feature in the transaction of business in New York are not an environment likely to imbue growing children with a belief in law and order as the normal state of man. Indeed, probing deeper into the problem, we might find it is not wholly bitter necessity that has made the armored tank a regular part of our banking system. At heart we may take pleasure in the gun-and-bandit effect.

One reason for our lawlessness is supposed to be our laxness in law enforcement. We have so many homicides because homicide is lightly punished. New York in the year 1932 had four hundred and fifty arrests for murder, resulting in something less than one hundred convictions and twenty-one death sentences. It is one death sentence for every twenty-one arrests. The same year in England there were forty-five arrests for homicide and ten death sentences, or one death sentence for less than five arrests. Murder is five times as safe in the United States as it is in England. The hazard is reduced, among other things, by a common practice on the part of the state's attorneys and the judges to accept pleas

of guilty in lower degrees of manslaughter where the evidence plainly shows premeditated murder carrying the death penalty.

And yet to say that indifferent law enforcement breeds lawlessness is again a vicious circle. If the American moral climate on the subject of homicide were different, the courts would not be so lenient with murder. They are not so lenient with crime against property, and the difference is not altogether due to the fact that the penalty for murder is a severer one. Basic is the native psychology which has little regard for human life in the abstract. It is no doubt regrettable that A should shoot and kill B, but to the practical mind B is dead beyond recall and it almost seems a pity to add to the casualty list by sending A to the electric chair. It is the same feeling that makes the judge impose a trivial fine on the drunken automobile driver who has committed manslaughter. Punishing him too severely will not bring back his victim to life. Almost is this an attitude towards the taking of life as so much spilt milk over which normal people will not fret too greatly. This would be particularly true if the slayer, whether by pistol or automobile, has risked his own life. People in the old frontier tradition shot it out with guns, and the doctrine survives in the case of motorists who drive it out with automobiles at seventy-five miles an hour. When the killer takes perhaps as big a chance as his victim, his guilt is virtually absolved.

Human life in the United States is cheap primarily because of the speed of life. It is not callousness to human life in itself, because we give much time and thought and vast sums of money to health activities of all kinds having for their object the conservation of life. It is surely not indifference to human suffering because more than fifty years after James Bryce made the statement it is still true that kindness is a dominant American trait. In the relief of suffering or physical affliction our people will sometimes go to fantastic lengths, as when we organize football teams for the blind. The picture touches on the macabre, but the fact of good intentions and high courage is not to be denied.

The anomalous spectacle confronts us, then, of a people campaigning vigorously to extirpate disease, to relieve human suffering, to conserve human life by organizing Safe Fourths of July which eliminate perhaps a few dozen casualties in the whole country, to make a beginning at Safe Halloweens involving perhaps a score of casualties in the whole country and to tolerate nearly forty thousand automobile killings a year. It is more than toleration, it may be called actual encouragement; for even as the problem of automobile deaths takes on in public discussion the importance of a national problem, the automobile manufacturers continue to announce faster and faster cars. By the middle 1930's the

medium-priced cars had engines of one hundred horsepower or more and speeds of seventy-five miles an hour.

That our indifference to human life is largely due to the speed of American life finds corroboration in England and its automobiles. In that country, as we have seen, human life in the eyes of the law holds a much higher value than with us. Murder remains the fearsome thing which it has been in human tradition since Cain. But the growth of motor traffic in England had brought with it a cheapening of human life that only a few years ago would have been inconceivable. Relatively to her population, England has been killing half as many people on the high-roads as we in this country. Relatively to the number of automobiles, English motor deaths are actually twice our own. So we have the anomaly of an England where juries impose death sentences on murderers with little regard for the "passional" excuse that obtains in France or the Unwritten Law in this country; where it requires an enormous amount of public pressure to induce the Home Secretary to grant a reprieve in extenuating circumstances; where life is snug and safe and stable, but where human life in an automobile or on a motor highway grows cheap because it comes with a speeding up in the life of the people. Were it not that historic factors enter into the problem of lawlessness in the United States, one might argue that the accelerated tempo of English existence may well spread from the automobile to other spheres and interests so as to transform the traditional placidity of English life; the swift petrol pace may undermine the traditional law-abiding English nature, and the time will come when homicides in England approach the American norm as English motor speed approaches the speed and vibration of our own automobile civilization.

The pace of living in any country or epoch will largely determine the value of the individual life. Wherever a great many automobiles are in use there will be a great many people killed by automobiles. Wherever pioneer conditions prevail the pioneer ethics will prevail. Human life will be cheaper in young countries like the United States or in countries where vast new experiments are conducted, like Soviet Russia, than it will be in countries where existence is more finished and stable. Business morals will be looser under the same conditions. At the height of the Depression many of our own people drew invidious comparisons between the ethical standards of American financiers and those of Great Britain. The contrast was stressed between our own banking system which ran into the ditch on the eve of President Roosevelt's first term and the banking system of Canada where not a single bank failed. But it was not at bottom a difference between financial morals or financial systems but

between national temperaments. If the United States had had Canada's centralized bank system, our financial debacle in 1933 would have been not very different from what it was; and if Canada had had our loose system of state banks, it is safe to say that she would never have fallen as low as we did. The banker is, by definition, a man of caution, and the American banker, compared with his average countryman, would show something of that professional conservatism even at the crest of a business boom.

But obviously no class, trade or profession can escape the basic conditions of the national temper. It is impossible for the American banker to be cautious as the English banker is cautious, because the speed of American business and American life will not permit it. In his turn the English banker is far less conservative than the French banker. The French banker ministers to an investing public which puts safety first and is consequently satisfied with the small returns on government securities; in any event, as things used to be before the World War. By comparison the English banker with his far-flung investments in new countries is a much more adventurous businessman. By comparison with the Englishman, the American banker is an adventurer, and in very large degree he is bound to be. When in the course of twenty-five years we witness the rise of a new industry, the automobile industry, to first place in the economic life of the nation, or when in twenty years we see the rise of a second great business empire in the motion-picture industry, we can understand why even bankers in the United States should be carried away by the common belief in prosperity without end. The bankers are part of the national temperament. They are passengers with their countrymen, not only in the same boat, but in the same speeding automobile.

4

One ugly survival of pioneer behavior, and an ancient national reproach, is on its way to extinction. We may take it that a Federal anti-lynching law is not in the realm of practical politics, but we are also justified in believing that the need for Federal action has ceased to be crucial. The foul practice is dying out in the South.

Half a century ago, in the three years up to and including the centennial year 1889, the victims of lynching showed an annual average of one hundred and forty-two. At the turn of the century the annual average stood at one hundred and twenty-five, which was hardly a subject for self-congratulation. The end of another decade found the average annual lynchings down to eighty, and ten years further on, in 1917-19, they

were down to sixty. A decline of two thirds over a period of thirty years might have been reason for satisfaction in almost any other social evil but not in this particular offense against the nation's conscience and reputation. It is only ten years later, in 1927-29, that we were permitted to believe that the end of a national shame was in sight. The annual average lynchings for the three years was down to twelve. With the Depression came a relapse, but one which we have reason to regard as not too serious, considering the state of the public mind. The average for the seven years 1930-36 went up to seventeen, but one year, and oddly enough it was 1932 and the trough of the Depression, the number of victims was down to eight.

The antilynching bill of 1937 died in the Senate by filibuster after passing the House by a vote of more than two to one. The effect, however, could not help being felt in the South. This unquestionably happened after the defeat of the antilynching bill of 1922. The average for the preceding five-year period was nearly sixty victims a year. The average for the ensuing five-year period was twenty-two. Plainly the South was trying to put its own house in order with perceptible results. Over a period of fifty-four years, from 1882 to 1936, there were approximately four thousand seven hundred cases of lynching in the country. The years since the Armistice, approximately one third of the whole period, have witnessed only one tenth of all the lynchings.

5

Two hundred and fifty years ago the forces of life, livelihood and lawlessness were in combined and characteristic play on American soil. Professor Channing's picture of illicit trade in the American colonies under the regime of the Navigation Acts is like a preview of our own Prohibition experiment. It shows a whole community in revolt against an unpopular set of laws. Violation of the customs proceeded on an enormous scale, and public sentiment on the subject of smuggling was very much like public sentiment on the subject of drinking under the Eighteenth Amendment. Our iconoclast historians in the realistic years after the Armistice took pains to remind us that the Founding Fathers were often no better than they should be and that John Hancock, for instance, was a smuggler. But the writers did not always take pains to remind us that for a New England merchant in colonial times to defy the British Navigation Laws involved as much moral obliquity as for a college president to take a drink under the Eighteenth Amendment.

Two hundred and fifty years ago Channing shows us a Rum Row

operating off the American coast, except that rum was not the only commodity that refused to pay tribute to the British exchequer. In 1692 the newly appointed Surveyor General of the Plantations on the American Continent finds the tobacco colonies on the Chesapeake violating the Navigation Laws as freely as in earlier days the New Englanders did. "In one specific instance he offers evidence that in 1692 a Dutch vessel anchored in the Delaware, transferred between two and three thousand pounds' worth of goods to Maryland boats and with the proceeds purchased one thousand hogsheads of tobacco. Another vessel which he seized was laden with brandy and wine from Norway." On Manhattan Island the merchants and shipowners "had never paid much attention to trade regulations of any kind." The collector of the port in New York was hand in glove with the law violators. Colonial juries everywhere refused to convict. When St Pierre-Miquelon became the headquarters for wide-flung operations against the Eighteenth Amendment after 1920, it was in the classic tradition.

Another way in which the Navigation Laws were evaded was to import goods into the Continental colonies by way of Newfoundland, for the fishery of that island was given exceptional privileges by English law. Brandy, wine and other European goods were carried to that island from France in French vessels and were taken thence to New England by the fishermen of Boston and Gloucester.

And in our own day the descendants of these Gloucester fishermen engaged in exactly the same ferry service from St Pierre and Miquelon not far from Newfoundland, which islands were left to France in 1763 for its fishermen to dry their catch.

Plainly, then, we must go back much further than the frontier of the gold-seekers, or even the frontier of Daniel Boone and the Indian fighters, for the whole explanation of the lawless streak in the American character. All of America in 1690, and nearly all of it in 1790, was frontier. Up to the Revolution it was a frontier far removed from the center of authority which was supposed to be in England. The distance across the Atlantic was too great. Colonial legislatures were always nullifying the royal veto by outwitting and outsmarting. They would pass laws that remained valid, for years perhaps, until the royal ban arrived from London. They would then re-enact the law in slightly altered form and wait comfortably for another veto.

We may sum it up by saying that for a colonial people three thousand miles away from the homeland in the days before steam, the practice of disobedience was a natural state of things. Kipling accuses the American of flouting the law he makes and making the law he flouts, but the habit

began by Americans flouting the law which the English government made for them. The habit has persisted long after the removal of the original cause, nourished in large measure by a subsequent national experience made up of a succession of frontiers: geographical, economic and psychological. Across the centuries we may catch occasional glimpses of a family likeness between American lawlessness in 1690 and a state of things on Christmas Eve 1935 when the country rang with indignation at the news that Charles A. Lindbergh, his wife and his young son were at sea on a small freighter bound for England to make a home there. Some time before their flight a large automobile overtook the automobile in which little Jon Lindbergh was being taken to school, forced the car to the curb and launched a small army of photographers who snatched their pictures of the frightened child and drove away. An editorial in the New York *Herald Tribune* commented on the sad picture of a nation making life intolerable for one of its most distinguished sons by its failure to protect him from lunatics, criminals, sensationalists, politicians and yellow newspapers. "The excesses of the American temperament are an old story. They have yielded prime virtues such as hospitality and generosity. But they have produced not less barbarism and cheapness."

But an equally authentic American note was sounded by the New York *Daily News*, a journal of enormous circulation. It confessed that the forced flight of the Lindberghs was a cause for shame and that the governor of New Jersey made a mistake in espousing at a late hour the cause of the convicted kidnaper and murderer of Colonel Lindbergh's first-born. Yet the *Daily News* found Colonel Lindbergh not without blame. "He has always invited publicity by shunning it. We do not think he would have been pestered if he had acted more as a popular hero is supposed to act, and been less embarrassed in the public gaze."

Another popular New York journal was outraged at the thought that "the Lindys" this Christmastide would be on a lonely freighter in the icy North Atlantic, and it called on all Americans to feel shame and to resolve to clean up America so as to make it safe for "Lindy's" little son. It was this journal whose photographers made the raid on little Jon Lindbergh.

6

It was in the Old World that a poor man remarked to his patron, "But a man must live!" and the rich man replied, "I do not see the necessity." It was in the pioneer dance halls of the New World that they used to have a sign on the wall saying, "Don't shoot the pianist, he is doing his

best." Two basic philosophies of the Old World and of the New are not unfairly contrasted in these two citations.

Fifty years ago James Bryce praised American good humor and generosity. To some extent Mr Bryce was fortunate in the time. Had he been writing a full generation earlier he would have been weighed down, like so many of his countrymen, by the spectacle of Negro slavery. Were he writing in or near our own time he might have been troubled by economic forces that are conceivably a threat to the foundations of American good nature. For Mr Bryce saw America as a land of hope; "and a land of hope is a land of good humor." Today there are people who say that the national area of hope has contracted sharply. There is no more Frontier. There is far less plenty of room on top. There is not enough for all.

But it is by no means certain that Mr Bryce would have agreed. Fifty years ago he said:

There is in the United States a sense of human fellowship, a recognition of the duty of mutual help owed by man to man, stronger than anywhere in the Old World, and certainly stronger than in the upper and middle classes of England, France or Germany.

Things have changed in England and France—partly in the direction of Americanism. But Mr Bryce's statement sounds quite as valid as when he made it. It is still true that in Europe the inclination is to shoot the pianist who makes night hideous, but in this country people insist on remembering that the pianist is only engaged in making a living. To the American mind the most sacred, elemental, unassailable human value is a man engaged in holding down a job; not the man apart from his job, but the two together.

We refuse to shoot the pianist when he is a reporter climbing through a window, intent on a honeymoon story for his yellow newspaper. It is only necessary for the reporter to explain that if he comes back without a story he will lose his job. The householder will not only refrain from evicting the reporter but may help him write his story and provide him with the necessary photographs.

We refuse to shoot the pianist when he is the author of a very bad book or the producer of a very nasty play. What we usually do is to say that the book is pretty nearly as bad as a book can be but it is nevertheless a book everyone should read. The play is puerile and indecent but can be heartily recommended to the public. The basic reason is that the writer of the book and the producer of the play are, after all, trying to make a living.

We refuse to shoot the pianist when he is a politician looting a city.

Every now and then we do manage to turn the rascals out. In the intervals we acquiesce, and it is not wholly laziness or indifference on the part of the public, as is commonly stated. Unconsciously perhaps, but effectively, we subscribe to the belief that a politician who steals a little is after all engaged in making a living.

Many unkind reasons may be adduced for the lack of such a thing as the critical temper in America. There is our youth and immaturity: we have not yet developed rigid standards. There is our intellectual tepidity. We do not care enough about things of the mind to grow excited about right and wrong ideas. There is our materialism, which would resolve itself into the preceding statement. There is our herd spirit: we are swept along on the waves of fad and fashion.

All these things may, in varying measure, be true; but the basic reason for the nation's lack of high critical standards is the national trait of kindness; live and let live; veneration for the job. It is a creed embodied in the commandment always to be constructive in criticism and never destructive. To be merely destructive is to tell a man who is engaged in making a living to stop doing it. To be constructive is to show him another job and preferably a better job.

In recognizing the sacrosanct character of a man engaged in making a living we must not confuse living with life. In this country a livelihood is sacred, whereas life is notoriously cheap. The two things are quite compatible. We may shoot the pianist in a quarrel over cards. We may shoot him in the course of a political argument. We may shoot him in a family feud. We may shoot him because we dislike his manner of walk or speech. But we must not shoot the pianist because he plays the piano badly. We may take his life—on condition of staking our own—but we must not interfere with his trying to make a living.

At the expense of discomfort to others? Decidedly. At every cost to others short of depriving those others of their own right to a living. The Frenchman fails to see why the sanctity of his foyer should be invaded by some poor devil of a salesman who has to make a living. He does not see the necessity. The Englishman in his home and castle will slam the door on the reporter who is trying to make a living. But the average American, when a salesman demonstrates a new loud-speaker under his window at midnight, will protest mildly if at all. The man with the noise is only trying to hold down a job.

This is kindness, of course. It is the full recognition of "kind," of kin, of human fellowship. It is acknowledgment that the next man is just as good a man as myself in his elementary right to a place where to lay his head and to three meals a day.

CHAPTER IV

Women

THE WORLD of women's interests, more than any other phase of our inquiry, is rich in illustrations bearing on the central theme of the present volume. This would be the persistent factors of American life operating beneath the surface of change. Very few subjects of public discussion lend themselves so easily to the use of the adjective "revolutionary" as the status of women, and in very few departments of the national life do we find so many facts refusing to fit into the formula. The phenomenon of "lag" is nowhere so conspicuous as in the record of woman's progress during the last fifty years. The standard phrase demands that in this period the world of the American woman shall have changed beyond recognition. Actually, we find the life of American women today quite easily identifiable by the norms of half a century ago.

One special reason why we should be prepared to find the facts falling far behind the formula in the case of women is that women are the historic victims of facile generalization. Women are a subject on which every man is qualified to make general pronouncements by the mere privilege of his sex. Any statement on the subject of Woman possesses *prima facie* validity; and even two contradictory statements in the same mouth. Almost any noun or adjective will adequately round out a sentence beginning "Woman is . . ." or "Women are . . ." The subject is one on which exact thinking has never been regarded as essential. It is therefore a matter of course, in an age replete with new eras and revolutionary changes, that the eras shall be more strikingly new and the revolutionary changes more revolutionary in woman's sphere than in the general life of society. And yet it is true that when a nation like Turkey or

Persia breaks with its ancient past the shock is less abrupt for the man who exchanges his fez and baggy trousers for European costume than it is for the woman of Islam who must make the whole transition from the harem to our Western way of life. So again, nearer home, it is quite true that the modern industrial system is a far less revolutionary experience for the male worker who has always in great numbers been a wage earner than it is for the woman who leaves the home to become a wage earner in factory, shop or office.

The trouble lies in the use of revolutionary change and profound change as synonymous. The changes of half a century in the status of women have been profound and far-reaching but not revolutionary. Woman's life today is in the main what it was fifty years ago. We stress the things that have changed and forget the things that are still the same. We think of millions of women in the gainful occupations and overlook many more millions who are still in the home. In the Federal census of 1890 the women wage earners were, roughly, four million. Forty years later, in the 1930 census, they were eleven million. These additional millions of women workers are an enormous fact. It is a population greater than that of Australia or Sweden. And yet there is another way of looking at this great migration from the home into the gainful occupations. When the women workers were four million strong in 1890 they were eighteen out of every one hundred females over the age of ten. When the women workers were nearly eleven million strong in 1930 they were twenty-two out of every hundred females over the age of ten. If we visualize a sample group of one hundred American women beyond early childhood fifty years ago eighteen of them would be working outside of the home for pay. Forty years later there would be twenty-two of them in every similar group. In 1890 the homemakers would be eighty-two and in 1930 they would number seventy-eight.

Here is obviously no revolutionary change in the fortunes of all the women in the country. If the question arises, as it often does arise, why the behavior of women today should be unexpectedly thus and so, considering the invasion of the gainful occupations by women in the last fifty years, we are not compelled to fall back on psychological explanations like "lag" or mystical interpretations involving the supposed basic nature of Woman. The simple answer would be that woman's invasion of the gainful occupations has not been so revolutionary as we imagine, when tested by relative numbers and not by absolute numbers. In fifty years we may have added eight or nine million women to the self-supporting class. But in appraising the effect on the national life and on the status of women, we must content ourselves with saying that out of every one

hundred American women the self-supporting women are four or five more than they were fifty years ago.

This same test may be applied here to other aspects of the problem, to interests more weighty, even today, than woman's economic independence. Her main interest and overtowering interest today is still marriage and her family. What are a woman's chances of marriage today compared with fifty years ago? They are better today. A larger percentage of females over the age of fifteen enter marriage now than in 1890. How early does a woman marry now compared with fifty years ago? At the same age approximately. This is true for the young people of both sexes.

What are a woman's chances of a successful marriage? Here, obviously, is one of the great changes we must reckon with. Fifty years ago there were something less than six divorces for every hundred marriages. In the year 1935 it was sixteen divorces for every hundred marriages. In half a century, let us say, divorce has become three times as common. Yet at the end of fifty years it is still true that five out of every six marriages endure.

Motherhood is a department of a woman's life that has experienced the most profound change. The regulated small family promises a greater revolution, in the course of time, than the greatest of political and social revolutions that it has been the privilege of this generation to witness. But even here it has not been so far the extraordinary transformation usually taken for granted. The average American family in the census of 1930 consisted of four persons, or two children to the family. Fifty years ago, in the 1890 census, the average family consisted of 4.9 persons, or very nearly three children to the family. It is, to put it mildly, an impressionistic way of describing the past when we contrast the two-child family of today with the six-child family of the 1890s and the virtually unlimited number of sons and daughters that graced the home of the 1850s. The picture is largely imagination. Ninety years ago, in the 1850 census, ten years before the Civil War, the average family consisted of 5.6 persons or three and a half children to the family. In the space of fifty years, between 1890 and 1940, the American family will have shrunk from three children to two, a momentous difference in the national book-keeping and a great difference in the management of our private lives, but not the vast difference we conjure up by picturing the home of fifty years ago as congested with growing life in all stages from infancy to young manhood and womanhood.

Something like three million married women were in gainful employment outside of the home in 1930. It is an army of women bearing the dual responsibility of wage workers and homemakers not very far under

the whole population of Switzerland. In absolute numbers and the peculiarly intricate nature of their problem, the married women workers are obviously a major social factor of our day. Yet the married women workers are little more than ten per cent of all the married women in the nation. Eight out of every nine married women still have the home as their sole economic interest. The married woman worker is a problem to herself and society, but she is not the typical married woman of the times. She is still highly unrepresentative.

Enough has been said to help us understand, in respect to women, the anomalies which seem to confront us on every hand. The consequences of profound change in the status of women apparently lag so far behind the facts; but they are not really anomalies and we are not compelled to fall back on "lag" or the eternal feminine. It is simply a case of exaggerating the change by concentrating attention on the things that have changed and forgetting the things that have remained the same. An interesting parallel presents itself in the field of unemployment which became one of our crucial problems after the great collapse of 1929. People wondered how the country ever managed to carry on with so vast a body of workers condemned to idleness. The answer is, in part, that we must think of employment as well as unemployment. In the very darkest days of 1933 we had three persons at work for every one idle; not a reassuring picture by any means, but nevertheless one that helps to explain our escape from utter paralysis.

So it has been with women and their present status. Fifty years have seen changes in the lasting nature of the marriage tie, but five marriages out of six still escape the divorce court. Eight married women out of every nine are still housewives. One married woman out of every three is still the mother of three or more children, which was the norm fifty years ago. Women marry as often as they did fifty years ago, and as early. In other words, today's close similarities to conditions fifty years ago far outnumber the differences.

2

Woman's advance in the trades and professions after 1929 was maintained in the face of a prolonged business depression and a rate of unemployment three or four times the normal figure of pre-depression days. This is contrary to the general belief held as late as the beginning of Mr Roosevelt's second administration. Social-welfare workers and employment specialists had called attention to a movement to force women out of the gainful occupations in order to make room for men, and they

described it as a war marked by a spirit of defeatism in the ranks of women workers. Women wage earners were too ready to admit that right was on the side of the men. Perhaps they seized upon the opportunity to retire from a sphere of interest into which they had drifted. There may have been women who experienced a distinct sense of relief at the thought that they were no longer under the compulsion to seek a career; for it is permissible to assume that in this matter of women's economic independence something of the element of fashion and fad and imitation operated that we find in all human affairs. In a working army of more than ten million women at the beginning of the 1930s there must have been a not inconsiderable number who were not driven by economic need to seek employment, who felt no special urge to express themselves, who would even have preferred to remain in their earlier dependent status, but who went along with the times. They would now be the first to withdraw from the labor market in deference to the doctrine that the first lien upon a job belongs to the men workers. In times of distress men turn against the stranger, the newcomer, and in our common thinking the woman wage earner is still a newcomer and a stranger in the economic world; she still has to justify her right to work for a living. The woman worker in times of economic crisis and mass unemployment is exposed to the same challenge, to the same resentment, that rises up against another newcomer in the sphere of labor and livelihood, and that is the Machine. At the depth of the business depression in the early 1930s the menace of Technological Unemployment swept the country along with the menace of the woman wage earner.

Ultimately it was discovered that in both instances, the revolt against the Machine and the revolt against the woman worker, the facts were greatly exaggerated. The cry against the Machine subsided, and technological progress continued in the face of a huge standing army of unemployed. The retreat of women workers to the home must have very soon spent itself, if at any time it assumed the dimensions suggested in the reports of anxious observers. In any event the special unemployment census undertaken by President Roosevelt's orders in November 1937 revealed a state of things with regard to women workers in striking variance with common opinion. An analytical report of the census, published in the Fall of 1938, disclosed among other things that in the period since the regular Federal enumeration of 1930 the labor market had been invaded by nearly three million more women than could have been predicted from the normal growth of population and earlier trends in the progress of women in industry.

This accession of women workers in the course of seven years of busi-

ness depression would be almost exactly the number of new women workers in the twenty-year period after 1910. If that were not sufficiently impressive it was a gain achieved in the face of child-labor laws and old-age pensions, which would tend to hold back young girls and elderly women. Compared with 1930, there were in 1937 relatively fewer women seeking employment under the age of twenty and over the age of fifty. The census experts arrived at the conclusion that the great new army of female workers was recruited from recently widowed or divorced women, or from wives who went into the labor market to eke out an inadequate family income.

It does not follow that the extraordinary growth in women workers revealed by our special unemployment census represents a permanent trend; its astonishing departure from the normal and the expected would argue the contrary. But at the very least there has been no reversal of the secular trend, and woman's retreat from industry along the whole front, as established by purely a priori reasoning or described by sympathetic observers on the basis of insufficient data, is completely disproved. The grave problems confronting our industrial system will have to be solved without banishing either the Machine or the woman worker.

The Machine and the woman wage earner make their appearance together on the scene. The earliest machines in any country's industrial career are textile machines, and the operatives of the new textile machines are in the great majority women and children. This holds in recent days for India and China and Japan as it did for England one hundred and fifty years ago. As a nation's industrial life expands the partnership between women and machines tends to dissolve. In the early years of the present century the women factory workers in Japan outnumbered the men nearly two to one. Industry was very largely textile manufacture. A generation later the men in the Japanese factories outnumbered the women two to one, though in the cotton mills the women workers were still in an overwhelming majority of five to one. Once the wage-earning woman has got her start in the world with the aid of the textile machines, she continues to make her way in the gainful occupations without benefit of the Machine. At first sight this would seem to be contradicted by the story of the telephone and the typewriting machine. A generation ago James M. Barrie in his little play, *The Twelve Pound Look*, paid homage to the typewriter as the sword and oriflamme of economic independence for the women of the English middle classes. Twelve pounds sterling, or sixty dollars, was then the price of a writing machine, and the twelve-pound look was the look which came into the eyes of the middle-class English wife when the master of the house became too trying.

It hardly seems necessary to point out what the typewriter with its associated counting machines and other examples of business-office technology has done to create employment for women. We speak of the great armies of saleswomen in the shops and department stores; but in the two decades between 1910 and 1930 the number of women in the stores doubled and the number of women in the clerical occupations increased fourfold. In the latter year the women in the business offices numbered nearly two million. It was more than all the women in the factories. It was more than twice as many as the women in the stores and shops. It was more than eight times the number of telephone girls.

And yet, further thought will show that this enormous growth of women office workers can hardly be due to the fact that office machinery has made it possible for a woman to perform tasks formerly beyond her strength. Office work is not hard labor. Women secretaries and clerks could have written letters and copied legal documents by hand as male clerks did in olden times. Women bookkeepers could have kept ledgers. It is not the machines that have enormously stimulated woman's progress in industry but woman's cheap labor as an operator of machines. It is largely coincidence that the typewriter and the telephone made their appearance at the time when women were entering the labor market; though no doubt woman's invasion of the labor field was largely determined by the vast expansion of economic activity. This was chiefly conditioned by the heavy industrial machines which women did not operate, other than the textile machines aforesaid.

The greatest gain achieved by women in any one occupation, which incidentally is still the chief occupation for women by far, has been recorded without benefit of machinery. This is of course the teaching profession. In 1890 the public-school teachers of the nation were one hundred and twenty-five thousand men and three hundred thousand women, a ratio of two to five. Forty years later they were one hundred and forty thousand men and seven hundred and ten thousand women, a ratio of one to five. Machinery had nothing to do with this increase of four hundred thousand women teachers while the men almost stood still. It was the lower cost of a woman teacher's labor that gave her the advantage. The lower cost of woman's labor might be one explanation for the extraordinary increase in women workers revealed in the unemployment census of November 1937, which we have discussed.

Machines have operated to shift women from work in the home to the outside occupations in two ways: by cutting down women's tasks in the home and by offering them new opportunities outside. Sometimes the same machine has performed both functions, as when the textile machine

took away the woman's hand spinning and weaving and gave her a job in the cotton mill. This second function of the machine, that of providing work outside the home, we have seen to be losing importance with time. Woman's later economic conquests are in the nonmechanical fields—in clerical work, in trade, in the professions and semiprofessions. But the influence of the machine in lightening the burden of household toil continues. Baking and the washing of clothes have been going the way of the spinning wheel. Cooking has been simplified, where it has not been virtually eliminated by the can opener. Mechanical devices for cleaning and dusting have abolished drudgery. The modern home must be to its part-owner and historic chief operator a much brighter and pleasanter place than it was a generation ago.

Is it arguable that the home may become so pleasant that it will deter many women from drifting away into wage earning outside the home? The modern home is not only a pleasanter place and a lighter responsibility, but it is not so lonely a place as it used to be. Even for the rural housewife the old isolation has been ended by the telephone, the automobile, the radio. Over the radio the farm wife and her daughters in the Eastern United States, early in the morning of Thanksgiving Day, 1934, were guests at a royal wedding in Westminster Abbey. Three years later they were present in the same place at the coronation of George VI. Until television has been perfected the farm women of America must still wait perhaps a fortnight before they can see as well as listen to a coronation in the newsreels at the village theater. The makers of women's clothes say that new styles which formerly took two years to penetrate into the smaller towns now come there by screen almost as soon as they reach the metropolis.

The city, to be sure, has one great advantage over the small town and rural districts in the matter of new clothes. The small town may have its new gowns as up-to-the-minute as the metropolis, but the city has many more people before whom to display one's new clothes. This is not a consideration to be minimized. We must recall, when speaking of what the machines have done to break up the isolation of rural life, that the drift from the farms to the cities did not slacken in the prosperous years which saw the successive rise of the telephone, motion picture and radio. There is such a thing as the outside world coming into lonely places to create restlessness as well as contentment.

And yet it may well be that we are looking to the wrong type of machine as a possible agency in reversing the present trend among women away from the home to the gainful occupations. More effective than the telephone and the radio in relieving the tedium and loneliness

of housework may be the indirect influence of the whole technological trend which is giving the nation a progressively shorter working day and working week. What does more leisure mean for the men who are still, roughly, four out of every five gainful workers in the nation? The country is practically on a forty-hour production week. Organized labor is beginning to talk of a thirty-hour week in the not too distant future. We take it that the whole amount of new-won leisure will not be absorbed by recreation and other activities outside of the home. Men will spend part of their additional free hours around the house. The economists have already taken note of the phenomenon. As the standard working day in the first quarter of the present century went down from ten hours to eight hours, enough of the men's new leisure was invested in services in the home to make an estimated addition of five per cent to the family income. This is the value of the work done by the head of the house in gardening, household repairs which otherwise would have had to be done by paid labor, and general usefulness.

In a broader sense, then, the new home may become more attractive to the women because they will be less alone in it: they will see more of their men folk there. It was only in the humorous journals that women looked forward with dread to the time when they would have their husbands on their hands two full days a week in a forty-hour working week. Actually the principal urge which has been taking women out of the home and into the shops and the offices has been the desire to be with their men in the great, open, active world outside. Women have called it most often self-realization, but it has been really a craving for companionship. Women have sought escape from the loneliness of the kitchen to where the crowds are and the hubbub, even if it has so often been escape from the sameness of the kitchen into the sameness of the factory. Women have wanted companionship other than that of the children in the house. The prospects are that they will be getting more adult companionship as the men begin to come back to the home for more hours in the day and more days in the week. It is amusing that just when the dishwashing machine and the vacuum cleaner have come along to lighten the housewife's task the shorter industrial week is sending back to the home its historic assistant dishwasher and carpet-cleaner in the form of the husband. Subsistence living need not be work only in the garden: A man can do good subsistence work in the kitchen as well. Garden or kitchen or woodpile or furnace or attic, the new leisure implies a man pottering around the house a good many hours a week.

3

There is nothing in the actual record to justify the common notion that the World War greatly enhanced the role of women in the gainful occupations. It is a natural assumption based on the belief that women went into the industries to fill the gap created by four million men drafted into military service, and the gains then scored have never been relinquished. Actually it is written in the figures that woman's progress in the gainful occupations was retarded in the decade after the World War as registered in the census of 1930. If definite figures should establish for the decade after 1930 a great forward leap, as indicated in the special unemployment census, the cause would be not war but business depression.

The greatest advances in the fifty years preceding the 1930 census were made in the first decade of the present century. In the year 1880 the women workers were fifteen in every group of one hundred gainfully occupied Americans. In 1930 the women were twenty-two in every group of one hundred workers. Nearly the whole of this gain was scored in the first thirty years of this period. By the year 1910 the women workers were already twenty-one in every group of one hundred gainfully employed persons. Measured in decades, the increase in women workers was four times as rapid before 1910 as subsequently. In the single ten-year period before 1910 the women workers grew one and a half times as fast as in the twenty years after. This first decade of the present century was an era of vast immigration and a corresponding increase in the number of women and child workers.

Halfway through the decade of 1910-20 came the World War bringing a stoppage of immigration. Half a dozen years after the Armistice our new policy of sharply restricted immigration came into force. The result was a decline in the actual number of women entering the gainful occupations and at the same time a change in the character of the new industrial recruits and their objectives. They were no longer in such heavy numbers the women of freshly arrived immigrant families, and they did not seek the factories and other manual trades.

We have here the key to popular notions concerning women in industry. The later recruits have come from families more completely Americanized and occupying a higher social status. They have been, in much larger measure, the daughters of old-stock American middle-class families. Their chief conquests have been in occupations other than the manufacturing and mechanical trades which constitute Industry in a strict

sense. They have invaded the professions and semiprofessions, the clerical trades and commerce.

Between 1910 and 1930 the women in the factories showed hardly any increase in absolute numbers and a large relative decrease compared with the men. Out of every hundred factory workers the women in 1910 numbered seventeen. In 1930 they were down to thirteen. But in trade they went up from thirteen to sixteen in every hundred employees, and in the clerical occupations they went up from thirty-four to fifty. In 1910 the women in the factories outnumbered the women in the offices by more than a million and a quarter. Twenty years later there were one hundred thousand more women in the offices than in the factories. In 1910 the male white-collar workers outnumbered the women two to one. In 1930 they were very nearly even, with approximately two million each.

Thus the years have seen a great shift in the relative position of women's trades. In 1910 the five largest groups of women employees were, in numerical order, the laundresses, schoolteachers, seamstresses, textile mill operatives and stenographers. Twenty years later the five principal groups were the schoolteachers, stenographers, office clerks, saleswomen, and bookkeepers and cashiers. In 1930 the laundresses were down in seventh place, the textile operatives were in sixth place, and the seamstresses had dropped out of the first dozen places. To this we may add the change in women workers on the farm. In the course of twenty years after 1910 their numbers declined from more than 1,800,000 workers to exactly one half.

Specifically we may say that in the manual or onerous trades—agriculture, manufacturing and domestic service—there was an actual decline in twenty years from approximately six million women wage earners to something under five million. At the same time the pleasanter occupations—trade and telephone, clerical and professional—rose from less than two million women workers to not very far from five million. In the first decade of the century out of eight million women workers, three out of every four were in the less agreeable trades. In 1930, out of nearly eleven million women wage earners, one in every two was in the soft, middle-class occupations. The change is even more impressive when we recall how much pleasanter were some of the manual trades in 1930 than they were twenty years earlier. Large groups of women in the personal-service trades look upon themselves as closer to the white-collar workers than to the manual workers.

Progress within the agreeable occupations has been numerically much more notable in the newer trades and professions. The popular notion to the contrary is again to be explained by the element of prestige, nov-

elty and the picturesque. A woman lawyer or college teacher bulks larger in the public eye than a hundred of her sisters in the less intellectual occupations. Between 1910 and 1930 the women newspaper writers grew from something over four thousand to thirteen thousand. It was an increase of more than two hundred per cent against an increase in male newspaper writers from thirty thousand to forty thousand, or approximately thirty per cent. In the year 1910 twelve in every hundred newspaper writers were women. Twenty years later the women were twenty-five in every hundred. In 1910 the women engaged in religious and social-welfare work were less than ten thousand. Twenty years later they were close to fifty thousand and outnumbered the men in this field five to two. Women ordained as ministers increased in this period from less than seven hundred to well over three thousand, and the women lawyers increased from five hundred and fifty to nearly three thousand and five hundred. On the other hand, we have to note an actual and serious decline in the number of women physicians who in the first decade of the present century numbered nine thousand. Twenty years later they were less than seven thousand while the men showed an approximate increase of twenty-five thousand.

In other words, the progress of women in the standard professions, outside of teaching, has not been impressive. Measured by ten-year periods they moved forward most rapidly in the generation before 1910. It would be unfair to take into account the professions of engineering and architecture which had nearly a quarter of a million members in the year 1930, of whom the women were only a few hundred. But if we take the three major nontechnical professions, medicine, law and the ministry, the women would constitute only three per cent of the membership. Their best showing is still in medicine where the women are five in every hundred. In law they are two in every hundred. These figures need only be compared with older trades. In the theater the women outnumber the men. In art and the teaching of art they are two workers in every five. In music and the teaching of music they are very nearly one half. Of more than twelve thousand authors enumerated in the census of 1930 the women writers were not very far from one half. Women in the older professions—doctors, lawyers and clergy—in the 1930 census were less than fifteen thousand. The women actors, artists, writers and musicians were eight times as many. The women music teachers by themselves outnumbered the doctors, lawyers and ministers five to one.

4

We have restated in greatly elaborated form the thesis laid down at the beginning of the chapter. In appraising and discussing the status of women in gainful employment the distinction must be kept in mind between absolute numbers and relative numbers. We must check our figures on two fronts. We must balance the growth of women lawyers or women reporters—new professions—against the continued growth of women artists, theater folk and music teachers—old professions for women. Secondly, and even more important, we must balance the rise in women workers against the rise in men workers. In the course of fifty years after 1880 the number of self-supporting women grew from less than three million to nearly eleven million, but no competent appraisal of this great social phenomenon will fail to take note that the men workers, too, were not standing still. They did not grow quite so fast as the women workers, but they were far from being left in the ruck. While the women workers grew fourfold in the course of fifty years the men grew threefold. While the women workers grew from three million to eleven million the men grew from fourteen million to thirty-eight million. We are properly impressed by a new army of eight million wage-earning women. We do not always take into account the counterbalancing effect of a new army of twenty-five million male wage earners.

To present the problem in the most elementary terms, we may imagine all the workers of America reduced to the scale of a microscopic community of one thousand gainfully employed individuals, assembled in a meeting-hall or public square in the year 1880, and again in the year 1930. In the former year our crowd of one thousand American workers would be made up of eight hundred and fifty men and one hundred and fifty women. Fifty years later our model audience would consist of seven hundred and eighty men and two hundred and twenty women. There will be seventy more women and fewer men. It is a noticeable change, but it is not an overwhelming transformation. The women especially would be more self-conscious in a crowd where their relative prominence has risen from a ratio of two women against eleven men to two women against seven men. But, after all, a ratio of three and a half to one in favor of the male worker is still enough to make this a recognizable man's world in the economic sphere.

An army of nearly eleven million working women, as enumerated in 1930, an army of perhaps fourteen million women who think of themselves as working women in 1940, as suggested by the special Federal

census on unemployment of which we have spoken at length, is a mighty host. The second figure would be twice the population of Australia, and two thirds the population of Spain. It is a vast congregation of women to whose special tastes a great body of educators, writers, artists, thinkers and amusement workers will minister. It is a constituency which will call forth its own public spokesmen. It is a huge market supplied by new arts, trades and industries. But for the whole nation of men and women the importance of this woman's world is bound to assume the much more moderate proportions of an economic society in which there are still very nearly four men workers to every woman worker.

5

In the Congressional elections of 1938, eighteen years after the ratification of the Woman Suffrage Amendment, five women were elected to the House of Representatives out of four hundred and thirty-five members. Among the full-term members of the United States Senate there was one woman out of eighty-eight. In the Legislatures there were one hundred and twenty-seven women in twenty-seven states out of an aggregate membership of seven thousand five hundred for all the forty-eight states. In New York City there was one woman on a City Council of twenty-six members chosen by proportional representation. In the country there were a few women judges, and in Ohio a woman sat on the Federal bench. President Roosevelt in 1933 made Miss Frances Perkins his Secretary of Labor; she was the first woman to attain Cabinet rank. The daughter of William J. Bryan was sent as minister to Denmark. Miss Josephine Roche of Colorado became in November 1934 an Assistant Secretary in the Treasury Department, in charge of the Bureau of Personnel. But the elevation of Frances Perkins could not obscure the painful fact that women had scarcely begun to make their mark as office-holders. Their strength in Congress, for instance, was less than one half the proportional strength of the fifteen women in the British House of Commons about the year 1935. At the beginning women were elected to Congress not on their own merits or for political reasons but on sentimental grounds; they took the place of their deceased husbands. At one time Wyoming had a woman governor similarly chosen. The only other woman governor in our history so far, "Ma" Ferguson of Texas, was notoriously a figurehead for her husband, the impeached governor, "Jim" Ferguson. After nearly two decades of woman suffrage the women polled forty per cent of the national vote, but their share of the offices was a

fraction of one per cent. Their six seats in the Seventy-sixth Congress were actually a decline from nine seats in the Seventy-first Congress.

Women have made a better showing in the party organizations, though it is a showing in perhaps more than one sense. The reality of power was not there. Tammany Hall, for example, has a woman associate leader by the side of every district leader, and the woman leaders have nominally an equal vote with the men in the election of a new Tammany chieftain. In the local offices the post of County Register was apparently set apart for the women. In the distribution of patronage the women have received a greater share than formerly, but in the main it has been on the lower levels; there are many more women election officers at the registration places and the polling booths. Substantially it may be said that if the purpose of giving the vote to women was to bring about the participation of women in the business of government, in the law-making bodies, the courts and the administrative branches, only the very smallest advance has been recorded in the space of nearly twenty years.

Nor does it appear that public opinion is greatly concerned about the matter. Women's organizations have not complained of discrimination; and the fact that the two major parties do not compete against each other by nominating many women for office would indicate that the issue is not considered one of outstanding public interest. It is not here a question of women conquering a share of public offices proportionate to their voting strength. Obviously a newly enfranchised class will remain for a long time underrepresented by members of its own class. It took a full generation before British Labor began to elect Labor party men to Parliament as distinct from Liberals with whom they were affiliated. But on the other hand a fairly large number of Labor representatives did enter Parliament as Liberals up to 1906, when Labor went its own way. In the United States the lawyers bulk so large in office as to make the legal profession almost a requirement for political preferment. The women lawyers comprise perhaps two per cent of the legal profession. Their actual share in public office is far short of even this modest ratio.

It can be argued that the purposes which woman suffrage was designed to foster do not in themselves demand the presence of women in Congress, the Legislatures and other centers of power. Woman's influence can make itself sufficiently felt in the court of last instance, at the polls. This power would be exercised for or against men candidates on issues of particular interest to women. Candidates may be safely counted upon to make their appeal to the women voters along with every other important group constituency. On a broader plane the influence of the women voters might assert itself in shaping party policies and attitudes.

The parties would compete for the women's vote in the field of social legislation, on the assumption that humanitarian laws—school laws, housing laws, workingmen's protection, hospital programs, and more recently, social protection—make a stronger appeal to the women.

Experience does not support this view. One cannot recall many instances of a candidate making a special bid to women voters beyond the usual perfunctory compliments to the sex. In other words there has been no strong tendency among the politicians to assume that women are more idealistic voters than men. The final test, of course, is furnished by the manner in which women voters actually differentiate themselves from the men on election day. On that vital point the proof was not long in coming that women for all practical purposes vote with their men. This has been shown wherever separate ballot boxes for men and women are in use. It was made emphatically clear in the one issue of recent years over which it might be supposed that women and men would most easily differ; and that was Prohibition. In the long series of polls and surveys, sectional and national, that preceded the repeal of the Prohibition Amendment in 1933, the division of sentiment was along geographical and class lines and not along sex lines. In any community the men and the women voted for Prohibition or against it very much alike.

The history of Prohibition might well be invoked to drive home a truth which has often been deduced from the facts just outlined. The principal result of woman suffrage has been only to add fifty or sixty per cent to the number of American voters. This has greatly increased the size of popular majorities. Victories seem more emphatic and defeats more disastrous than formerly because the public thinks in absolute numbers and not in percentages. Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1936 had only a slightly larger percentage of the total vote than did Theodore Roosevelt in 1904; but the Theodore Roosevelt plurality was two and one half million and the Franklin Roosevelt plurality was eleven million. The addition of the women's vote has emphasized political overturns without affecting their direction. The vote by which "Al" Smith the foe of Prohibition was beaten in 1928 was as badly swollen one way as the vote for Repeal was swollen four years later.

We may carry the argument from Prohibition still further. Women as voters simply moved with the tide in the ups and downs of Prohibition between 1920 and 1933, and yet we know that women were a strong factor on the side of Prohibition. They did not operate primarily through the ballot box. Women in the churches were the main influence that held wavering politicians in line for Prohibition until the dikes burst. The power of an organized minority does not consist in its numbers but in its

compactness and solidity. It need not be a very large minority in order to hold the balance of power. That power was repeatedly marshaled in the battles preceding the final decision for Repeal. In a sense, to be sure, it was the woman voter at the polls whom the politicians feared, but the mobilization was in the churches. Thus it might be said that American women won the suffrage in 1920 and then proceeded to assert themselves by pre-suffrage methods.

6

Sentiment, looking back through the romantic haze of the years, may have greatly exaggerated the virtues of the little red schoolhouse when judged by modern educational standards. No one questions the fact that the little red schoolhouse, such as it was, did constitute the intellectual training ground for the American people up to a generation ago. Sentiment has put the little red schoolhouse in charge of the schoolmarm. In the national vernacular Teacher is a woman teacher. Americans have readily acquiesced in the opinion of foreigners that the schoolmarm is a peculiarly American institution. It was a tenable argument even as early as the beginning of the present century when the teaching profession in this country had more than two women for every man. By the year 1930 it had become one of the major traits of the national civilization with nearly five women teachers for every man.

From this dominant schoolmarm phenomenon it is possible to argue in two directions. Our feminized schools might be the product of basic American psychology or they might be one of the sources of that psychology. Women are in possession of the American public-school system because of the notorious American woman-worship, or the national woman-worship is the outcome of the seizure of our schools by the women. Did the sentimental and diffident American male hand over the public schools to his women folk along with the enjoyment of art and the reading of books? It may not have been unmixed diffidence. The arts and literature, like schoolteaching, may have been relegated to the women because these things were not a man's work.

Most interpreters have chosen to make the schoolmarm cause instead of effect. She has been made responsible for what has been described as American softness in the sphere of the intellect. She was the chief prop of the Genteel Tradition against which American literature rebelled so lustily after the Armistice. Outside of literature and art the influence of the schoolmarm has been detected in the social temper and political behavior of the American people. Our peculiar susceptibility to vogues

and slogans, our quick surrender to moods and alarms, our political landslides and reversals, have been characterized as feminine behavior involving a touch of hysteria.

Unfortunately there is one awkward circumstance which is usually omitted in such diagnoses of American behavior. It is not true that the schoolmarm is a peculiarly American institution. The charge is true if we compare our schools with those of Continental Europe. About the year 1930, when we had nearly five women teachers for every man, the situation was almost the reverse in the German public schools where the men outnumbered the women four to one. But this was emphatically not the case in Great Britain. The figures reveal the surprising fact that the British are with us in being a schoolmarmed nation. In the year 1930 their "certificated" teachers were eighty-five thousand women to forty thousand men, or more than two to one; and if we include the uncertificated teachers, among whom the women were fifteen to one—teachers in the dames' schools and other low-standard schools—we find that the education of the British people is in the hands of the schoolmarm to the extent of three teachers in every four. This is obviously near enough to us and far enough away from the Continental male system to suggest that the woman teacher must be regarded not as an American phenomenon but a phenomenon of the English-speaking peoples.

The case is all the more surprising because from England comes so much of the head-shaking over the effeminization of the American schools. It is the English contention that the chief aim of schooling should be to mold character and not to impart learning; and for that purpose one must have a schoolmaster over boys in school. The battle of Waterloo could scarcely have been won on the playing fields of Eton if that celebrated institution had been in charge of a headmistress.

The seeming contradiction is removed if we recall that when Englishmen speak of a school they think of something like Eton, whereas we think of the little red schoolhouse and its successor, the consolidated rural school, and of the big urban schools and high schools. It is one more illustration of the interesting fact that when people say, "Americans are . . ." they have in mind all of the American people, but when they say, "Englishmen are . . ." they frequently mean not more than ten per cent of the English nation. American schools mean the schools which all but a small fraction of the American children attend. But too often English schools mean schools which only a small fraction of the English people attend.

This is not to suggest that in character or temper the English masses differ radically or even notably from the middle classes. On the contrary,

a uniformity of type and behavior runs through the different strata of the English social system that only the United States can surpass. But precisely because basic English behavior is the same in cook's son and duke's son, it is obvious that the famous British schoolmaster of the upper classes is not quite the architect of personality that romantic legend makes him. The same kind of character seems to be produced by the schoolmarms who outnumber the men three to one in teaching six million British children of the masses, and by the Dr Arnolds and Sandemans, who teach ten thousand well-to-do boys in what they call Public Schools and we over here call private schools. If the schoolmarm enfeebles national character then the English character should be in process of being undermined by more than one hundred thousand women teachers.

Here at home, at the beginning of the present century, the feminization of our schools was no greater than in English schools today. The reason for the continued decline in the number of men teachers in the next thirty years was not psychological but economic. The teacher's profession was not well paid when compared with other opportunities which America in 1900 offered the educated man. The men teachers were not ousted from their places by the women, but made way gladly. With a notable rise in the pay of teachers after the World War, the profession once more became attractive to men. There set in, about 1920, a reversal in the long-time trend which has not brought revolutionary results but which did produce in the course of a decade an increase of twenty-five per cent in the relative number of men teachers in the public schools.

CHAPTER V

Children

THE CHILD LOOMS much bigger in American life toward the end of the second Franklin Roosevelt administration than he did at the end of Grover Cleveland's first administration fifty years earlier. Primarily this is due to a notable decline in the proportion of children to the whole population. Childhood has taken on a scarcity value. It is a phenomenon observed in all countries where a falling birth rate has operated; that is to say, in all the leading countries with the exception of Soviet Russia and Japan.

The rising scarcity value of child life has been accentuated during the last half century by the march of humanitarianism on a wide social front. Many other areas of underprivileged life, as we would call it today, have been affected. The rights of the child have won recognition together with the rights of women, the aged, the sick and the working classes as a whole. Progress in child welfare, as in the other fields mentioned, has reflected the increased well-being of the nations, with the United States in the van. Humanitarianism is a luxury beyond the reach of very poor countries. Wherever we see the masses achieving a fuller and happier life the explanation is not to be sought primarily in a so-called higher social conscience but in an increase in national wealth. Without mounting prosperity in this country, the very great increase in educational opportunity of which we shall have occasion to speak later could not have come about.

If we took a true sample of one thousand Americans at the end of Grover Cleveland's first administration we should have found among them one hundred and thirty-eight children under the age of five. Twenty

years later, at the end of the second Theodore Roosevelt administration, the children under five years would have numbered one hundred and twenty-two. Twenty years later, in 1930, they would have been down to ninety-three. Our children under grade-school age had decreased in the course of less than half a century by nearly one third in relative numbers. Reduce our representative group to one hundred persons of all ages, and it would have included fourteen very young children fifty years ago and only nine of them ten years ago. A difference of five very young children in a group of only one hundred persons is more than noticeable.

Still impressive, though not in such degree, is the case of all children under fifteen years of age. Half a century ago our specimen of one thousand persons would have contained three hundred and eighty of them. Twenty years later the children under fifteen would have numbered three hundred and thirty. Twenty years later, in the last Federal census, they were two hundred and ninety-three. In the space of forty years our model American community of one thousand inhabitants had lost ninety children under the age of fifteen. Roughly speaking, there would be today only three children of beginning high-school age for every four of them half a century ago.

Oddly enough, as it may seem on first thought, fewer children in the world today result in more noise. There are fewer children to make a noise on their own account than there were fifty years ago, but there are more interested adults in the world to make a noise about them. For it is obvious that, if our model group of one thousand Americans today contains almost one hundred fewer children under fifteen, there must be that many more older persons in the group. Noise is not used here in an invidious sense. It describes the greater amount of thought, effort and sacrifice which an increasingly elderly nation expends on its dwindling stock of child life. Ours is an age which stresses with unabated zeal the freedom of the child. Modern parents shudder, often with good reason, at the picture of parental discipline in the past. But in one real sense there was more child freedom once upon a time. Children were allowed then, even between beatings, to grow up somehow. It was dangerous, it was costly, but freedom is always hazardous and expensive. Today the sidelines of childhood are crowded with parents in high tension, concentrating on the freedom of the child. There are eminently respectable neurologists, educators and child specialists who think the children are unfavorably affected by the thunder in the air.

We are in advance of our tale. Our immediate interest is in the basic fact of American child life growing scarcer and more precious. We have many fewer young people than there were fifty years ago, relative to the

whole population. Within the ranks of childhood the very little ones are decreasing more rapidly than the older children. For every hundred children of fifteen years half a century ago, we have today, proportionately, seventy-five. For every hundred youngsters under five we have today sixty-five. As late as the year 1920 the primary-grade children in the New York schools were about eighty per cent of the whole school population. In 1935 they were less than seventy per cent. If the future belongs to Youth, it is also true that Youth itself is getting older.

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When we speak of the prolongation of childhood in the modern world, it is the statement of a half-truth. We are describing only one external aspect of child life, its dependence on others for protection and support. The inner life of childhood is not being prolonged; on the contrary, it is being steadily curtailed. The problem takes on the form of a paradox. We are witnessing the curtailment of childhood and the prolongation of tutelage. The apostle Paul's statement needs serious modification today. When Paul was a child he spoke as a child, he understood as a child, he thought as a child; but when he became a man he put away childish things. With us today the childish things are put away long before children have become men and women by the test of economic responsibility. Our children in high school have given up speaking or understanding or thinking as children. They are wise beyond their years, as an older generation used to say. But many of them will be going to school, and dependent on their parents, for another five or ten years.

The prolongation of childhood in the field of labor has been notable. The passage of years finds fewer children at work and more children in school, so that between 1910 and 1930 the number of children under sixteen working for pay was cut down by four fifths. It is certain that in the near future the remnant of such child workers will be eliminated. Beyond that it is plain that the movement to abolish child labor will reach its goal before very long, and the eighteen-year age limit will have become the norm. Half of the population under eighteen is already in high school.

We shall go farther than that. School for a very considerable part of the population will prolong childhood beyond high school into college and the professions. In 1930, when one in every two children of high-school age was in high school, we had one seventh of the youth of college age—between seventeen and twenty-one—in college. If in that year

we had had in the colleges and professional schools the same student ratio that obtained at the beginning of the century, the attendance would have numbered less than three hundred thousand. Actually, the colleges and professional schools ten years ago had nine hundred and twenty-five thousand students. We may therefore say that in the course of a generation the period of childhood or youth has been prolonged by four years beyond high school for more than half a million persons. The next generation is sure to witness an accelerated folk movement towards the college.

We might carry this test a step farther and show how childhood in the sense of economic dependence has been prolonged for the professional students in the course of years. A generation ago the equivalent of an ordinary high-school education more than met the average requirements for admission to medical schools. Law and engineering were on the same level. Today a four-year college course is the standard requirement for a professional course of three or four years. For the medical graduate there follows a hospital internship of two or three years, so that it may be close to the age of thirty, in some cases, before a young doctor can fling his shingle to the breeze with a fair chance of achieving self-support. In the last Federal census the professions of medicine, law, engineering and dentistry had more than six hundred thousand members in the country, so that a very considerable section of the population is obviously affected by our rising scholastic standards and the consequent prolongation of dependence.

But if there has been a prolongation of childhood in the sense that young people continue longer in economic dependence than formerly, there has been a notable curtailment of childhood in the sense of "innocence," of spiritual dependence, of tutelage. It is not a theme that needs to be stressed at length. In the revolt which has been under way since the World War—though its origins antedate the war—against the thing which its defenders call reticence and its enemies call hypocrisy, in the new frankness practiced by the English-speaking world and especially by the American branch of it, the education of the child to the "facts of life" has reached a stage where the phrase has even ceased to be comic. The child in modern pedagogy is prepared for life by being let into the secrets of life as early as might be and often much earlier than he can understand.

This drastic initiation extends beyond the field of biology into the social sciences. People now feel it a duty that children shall be introduced without loss of time to the truth about George Washington or the present

economic system as well as the truth about the stork that formerly brought the babies. At a tender age, comparatively speaking, the schoolboy is to be taught that George Washington had his human failings, both as a man and a member of the community; that he was a very rich man and a speculator in Western lands; that he was a member of a ruling caste whose sympathies were for the propertied classes as against the masses. The child in school is to be taught that George Washington no doubt rendered admirable services to the American people and to humanity, but that after all by our present-day standards he was a man who, in our own language, placed property values above human values. Among the broader implications of this new adult treatment of George Washington for children is the theory that the child in school should be inoculated with a considerable measure of skepticism about flag and country and this whole business of Nationalism. The child should early be introduced to the very serious faults that characterize the capitalist system of production.

The contention here is not that the new iconoclastic ideas about George Washington are false—they may not be—but that even if they are true it does not follow that they should be taught to children. The illusions, the innocence of children about heroes and patriots, martyrs and saints, must be liquidated as early as possible; the child must be initiated into the facts of historic and economic life at the earliest moment. And it is plain that we have gone far in that direction. The schoolboy today is a much wiser person than his father was at his age, and certainly than his grandfather. The precocity of the age in sex knowledge if not in sex practice, in dress, in drinking and smoking, in frankness of conversation, is now a commonplace. And again there is not the slightest intention here to debate the question whether this is improvement or retrogression, nor in fact to deny the common assertion that our wise children of today are actually much cleaner in mind and body than our supposedly innocent children of the taboo epoch. It may be not only amusing but actually reassuring to hear young people say that the new book or the new play is a bit too strong for Father and Mother. It is a young generation with no dark and dirty corners of the mind.

But the anomaly of the present situation is that the son who laughs at Father's old-fashioned notions is today economically more dependent on his father than was the youth of a generation ago or two generations ago to whom Father was the source of wisdom and authority. In those days a boy became self-supporting at the age of sixteen, either by the work he did on the farm or the money he brought home in wages. Even in more prosperous families where the boy went to college his carefree life ended

at twenty-one; his childhood was at an end. But today the children of the well-to-do, who are wiser than their parents at seventeen, are dependent on their parents and will likely remain dependent in the normal course of events for another half-dozen years at least.

Even marriage today does not bring sharply to a close the period of childhood as it did once upon a time, remembering our definition of childhood as freedom from adult responsibilities. It is not that young people today marry later in life. Contrary to the general belief, the marriage age is, if anything, somewhat lower than formerly. Among a thousand young people between the ages of twenty and twenty-four there would be seventy-five more marriages ten years ago than there were fifty years ago. But once upon a time the responsibility of children followed immediately upon marriage, whereas today young married people postpone the building of a family to suit their economic and personal aims.

If childhood is innocence or ignorance then our forebears had a longer childhood. If childhood is freedom from responsibility, if it means less work and more play, less thought for others and more thought for one's self, then the advantage of longer childhood is with the children of today in striking degree.

3

About the nation's children in school the same warning will hold that we have had occasion to give elsewhere. We must go behind the returns for a true picture of basic conditions. It will then be manifest that so-called revolutionary changes in American education, as in other fields, are not as far-reaching, or even as imminent, as one might be led to think by the volume and intensity of public discussion.

The whole case is before us when the New York newspapers on the same day take due notice of the first nation-wide public school radio Commencement and of the retirement for age of a distinguished educator from the faculty of Teachers College in New York. His views are progressive, though he is not actually affiliated with the Progressive School movement. Many thousand teachers from every part of the country have studied under him and have presumably been touched with his advanced views on education, not to speak of a corresponding social outlook. How far-reaching a change in our schools does this single instance connote? How far may we be presumed to have gone in the same direction when the leading speaker at our public school radio Commencement, before an audience of millions of children, humbly apologizes to the little ones for the sins committed against them by their elders?

Offhand one would say that when the elder generation stands up on the school platform and, instead of proffering instruction and wisdom, exhibits itself as a horrible example and a warning, something revolutionary has indeed taken place in our public schools. But, then, against this conclusion would have to be set the fact that in the pages of a leading literary journal with a large following among schoolteachers a warm debate has been running for several weeks on the subject of *Silas Marner* in the high-school curriculum. A subscriber has proposed the elimination of George Eliot's school classic from the required reading list and the substitution of a contemporary best-seller. He encounters vigorous protest from schoolteachers and others. Who is right in the controversy does not concern us; the layman finds it highly significant, as well as astonishing, that *Silas Marner* is still on the required reading lists, after half a century. Yet a national conference of Progressive Schools a few months earlier, under the presidency of John Dewey, might easily lead the average newspaper reader to believe that the American public school has been revolutionized.

The facts are on the other side. The radical idea in education, as represented in the Progressive School, has signally failed to impress itself on the nation. New ideas in education are continually passing over from theory through experiment into common practice, but the Progressive School remains the special interest of a limited number of parents and educators. At bottom the Progressive School is arrayed against the whole spirit and trend of the national life when it eschews curriculum and discipline in favor of free individual activities. The conquest of higher education by the masses is one of the major events of our times. Progressivism in the school is aristocratic when it substitutes the idea of personal development for mass training. Self-development is well enough for persons who are planning to live on an independent income or who are born into a ruling caste. The so-called free activities in school will not suffice for the needs of a vast democracy.

Mass numbers require traffic rules, system, textbooks. When advanced educators rebel against such things it is really the old complaint of the Tories against the regimentation and mechanization and vulgarization of life by the oncoming masses. Since the mass life is here to stay there is no use in quarreling with it. The devil must not be allowed to have all the good tunes, and a democracy will not let the autocratic governments have all the regimentation. We need discipline for democracy and for freedom.

It is obvious, in any event, that a wide-ranging experimentalism in popular education was more logical and more easily attainable fifty years

ago, when the high schools had three hundred and sixty thousand students, than it was in 1936, when we had 6,300,000 high-school students. The population in fifty years has something more than doubled, and the high-school population has increased seventeenfold. We cannot have the same free-and-easy methods for an army that we have for an elite. Fifty years ago of all children of high-school age only one in every eighteen went to high school. In 1930 it was one child in every two. In the latter year it was as ordinary a thing for an American boy or girl to go to high school as it was in 1870 for them to go to primary school. The democratic character of this conquest of secondary education can be even more clearly pictured by comparing private and public high schools. Fifty years ago there was one student in the private high school for every two students in the public high school. Ten years ago, in 1930, there was one student in the private high school for every fifteen students in the public high schools. In the space of forty years the actual number of private students had increased less than four times, and the public high-school students had increased twenty-two times. Even in the primary schools, where the democratic principle would naturally be stronger from the first, the trend in the last fifty years has been towards greater democracy. Half a century ago there was one child in a private elementary school for every eight children in the public schools. Ten years ago it was one child in private school for every ten children in the public schools, and this in the face of a great increase in national wealth.

Such in brief is the picture of expanding opportunity for the children in the last fifty years as measured in terms of schooling. In the year 1900 the nation's school bill was ten dollars a year per child, and in 1930 it was seventy-three dollars. When we say that in the nation at large the child is a rarer article today than he was at the beginning of the century we must remember, on the other hand, that children in school are more common than formerly. Out of every hundred children of school age, we had sixty-seven children in school forty years ago and eighty-one children in school ten years ago. In the nation at large the child is today ten per cent rarer. In school he is twenty per cent more common.

But, as we began by saying, the nation's expenditure on the school children in thought and devotion has been even more impressive than the money outlay. The search for a newer and better pedagogy has been attended by experimentation at times running wild, which is to be expected, but also by innovations that contradict each other. Progressivism in the school has for its ideal the fullest measure of self-expression for the child, but we scarcely have individuality triumphant when several million children are marshaled simultaneously to a single country-wide

radio program. Against this threat of the radio as a power for mass regimentation, we need the prophylactic of individuality. We must use the schools to build up safeguards for the individual soul against an adult world tending to ever larger mass patterns. It is the anomaly and the mischief of the situation that modernist school methods should be trying to stress individuality without providing the growing child with the weapons of self-defense. Experimentation urges the child to insist on being himself, but it often takes away from the school child the proven tools which the older education does give him for the vindication of his personality and his rights.

We may take the concrete example of teaching the child how to read, the most important of the old three R's. It is a part of the curriculum for which Progressive education has no great ardor. The new ideas lay stress on creative activities like stage-craft and boat building. They frown on passive learning, like the mastery of the art of reading. The result is that children grow up to read with difficulty and to avoid reading when they can. And yet, if ever there was a time when the printed word was needed as a defense for man's elementary human rights it is today in the face of the radio and the new political despotisms. In propagandizing and regimenting his subjects the dictator makes the radio his favorite instrument. The intimidated nations are continually being herded to the loud-speakers. Liberty in its struggle against dictatorship can make little use of the wireless. One does hear of secret radio stations in Germany, of opposition messages broadcast from an automobile or airplane; but the method is cumbersome, expensive and dangerous, and not readily available for a suppressed minority. Today the opponents of autocracy in Germany, Italy, Soviet Russia, put their main reliance on the traditional minority weapon of the underground press. The Soviet dictatorship is being fought with the same mechanics of propaganda that were employed against the autocracy of the Czars. Today, as fifty years ago, suppressed minorities use pamphlets, circulars, fly sheets, printed on tissue paper and smuggled from hand to hand. Where a hidden printing press is not available a humble mimeograph machine will do. Where that method is too elaborate people are no doubt resorting to the methods employed against the Russian censorship one hundred years ago, when prohibited publications were copied out by hand. Just as the printed or written word in the Bible became a powerful weapon for the individual judgment against established authority, the privately circulated word is needed again to uphold the cause of individual liberty and dignity against autocracy fulminating on the radio. After five hundred years mankind is once more driven to read furtively and

scribble hastily in a cellar, in its guerrilla fight against the masters of the radio and the governmentalized press.

Even in the democratic countries, where the newspapers are free and the radio is uncontrolled, the ability to read with ease is obviously a precious thing as a defense against the automatic tyranny of the radio. The leveling, flattening pressure of modern technology in the realm of communication finds its victims so easy to iron out if they are without the stiffening of the printed word for the protection of their individual souls. Bertrand Russell, far from a cloistered thinker, complains of the destruction of privacy in the modern world. It has become so hard for a mind to be alone with itself even for a little while. But if the ability and desire to be alone with a book or an idea is destroyed we have laid the ax to the root of human personality. And so, in lesser degree, stands the second of the three R's, writing. If we discourage the capacity to set down one's own thoughts, as distinguished from the newspaper and radio mass thought of the moment, we have crippled that very personality which Progressive education sets out to foster.

We are in similar case with the third of the three R's, arithmetic. One could hardly go farther astray than the New York school official who announces that he will work for the abandonment of all the pretentious school mathematics; he will concentrate on teaching the future girl waitress or department-store saleswoman how to figure out what the boss owes her for three quarters of a day at so much a week. It is a brave desire to tie up arithmetic with life, of which we have another instance in the state of things that precipitates a parents' uprising in Long Island. There it is a school in which the boys are taught baking and cooking because, among other things, they learn arithmetic while mixing their ingredients. The parents complain that their boys learn to prepare fancy desserts for dinner but do not know where to look on the map for Albany and Buffalo.

Schoolboys, in other words, are being taught how to bake bread at a time when housewives are abandoning the art of breadmaking. Boys are being taught how to cook at a time when every kind of meat and vegetable may be bought ready cooked in a can. The girl waitress does not really need to go to the trouble of calculating her wages for three fourths of a day. There are statistical tables already worked out for every conceivable purpose. The waitress no doubt has access to a printed card which gives the proper wage for every fractional part of a day; wholly aside from the thought that her wages will be set down in a contract signed between her employer and her trade union. There is no practical need for being able to figure out eight gallons of gasoline at

nineteen and one half cents; it is all there on a printed card over the gas pump. It is modernist arithmetic to teach a girl how much are three pounds of sirloin at forty-five cents a pound; actually it belongs with the obsolete Victorian arithmetic about papering walls and carpeting floors, about ditches thirty feet long dug by so many men working so many hours a day.

What we need, on the other hand, is precisely an understanding of the big arithmetical sums and the percentage formulas which the modern educator would discard. We need to teach people the difference between millions of dollars and billions of dollars, because it is a difference that often escapes the modern newspaper writer. Well-edited journals are constantly printing three zeros too many or too few. The average citizen needs a good training in zeros, in percentage, in proportion, as a defense against the wild and whirling figures that fill the air today. Budgets, debts, crops, capital, profits, wages, German unemployment, Soviet school statistics—we need everywhere a sober arithmetical sense to protect us against fallacies and absurdities and plain inventions. If it is to be an age of wealth redistribution a man should know something about ratios and totals. He should know something about the simple arithmetic employed in the present chapter when we speak of a population doubling in numbers but the school children increasing twenty-fold. It is not of vital importance that children in a social-minded age shall be expert in buying rib roast at the butcher's, but good citizenship requires that children shall grow up with a fair notion of what part of its income the average American family spends on food, how much on rent, clothes, schooling, recreation. Without a sound notion of arithmetic we cannot discuss wages, hours, living standards and the whole complex of problems summed up under the head of social justice.

For us the outstanding question of the age is whether free government can compete with autocracy in raising the economic status of the masses. Hence it is imperative that our people shall be competent to test the arithmetical claims advanced for the superior efficiency of autocracy in Germany, Italy or Russia. If the new civilization is to be characterized by a juster distribution of wealth among the people we need a good arithmetical equipment for the task. We cannot share without being able to count. We are asked to envisage a new world in which science, harnessed to social justice, will take the place of outworn taboos and prejudices. It means a new world scientifically appraised and directed towards the common welfare. For such a world it is hardly a preparation when schools discard arithmetic and concentrate on self-expression.

This basic contradiction between modernist educational dogma in its

extreme forms and the modern world to which its practitioners aspire is overlooked by spokesmen for the rights of the child. One of them says:

Loving freedom of action, children are made to sit over books. Hating thinking, they are made to repeat the thoughts of others. Unable to grasp the subtle interplay of human lives and human institutions, they are brought into raw contact with them.

Yet it seems to be largely a matter of inflection. The words we have quoted are intended to describe a series of crimes and atrocities against the living soul of the child. Pronounced with a different set of overtones, the indictment merely says that we try to teach a little reading to children who, if left to themselves, would play all the time. We try to teach the elements of thinking to children who naturally hate to think—like their elders.

This familiar charge against the dogmatism of the older education has a different sound if applied to an important branch of child training outside of the schoolroom. One might say of children: "Hating spinach, they are made to absorb four ounces of the stuff daily, or go without dessert. Loving to put into their mouths everything they pick up in the street, they are made to wash their hands before being given their supper. Unable to grasp the serious consequences of dental caries and soft gums they are nevertheless made to brush their teeth."

Is it unfair to put the bodily care of the child on all fours with the training of his mind and spirit? If anything, there is less to be said for compulsory spinach than for compulsory spelling. About spinach there may be considerable divergence of opinion. We have dietary revolutions every few years. At the same Child Study Conference which heard the protest against compulsory learning another speaker sounded a note on diet that comes very close to fatalism:

Whether a child is to be short or tall, thin or fat, muscular or flabby, weak or strong, emotional or placid, handsome or homely, athletic or sedentary, depends almost entirely on inherited factors. Medical supervision cannot exceed that of a service station, which can never alter the fundamental human mechanism.

We find progressive parents insistent on the inculcation of proper physical habits—food, sleep and the bodily functions—though more and more our ideas are moving toward biological predestination. Yet parents will insist on discarding guidance in molding the mind and soul of children, where we have plenty of evidence that desired results can be ob-

tained. Autocracy in Italy, Germany and Russia has been eminently successful in turning out a spiritual article strictly in accordance with specifications. But we of the democracies are urged to throw away our defensive weapons by refraining from educating the young to do a specific job. Having substituted for the good old word "teaching" the hated word "indoctrination," we fold our arms and wait for a race of independent Knowers, Doers, Thinkers and Feelers, in face of the fact that children cannot acquire knowledge unaided, that most people are not gifted with initiative and energy, and most people hate to think.

4

Of children as wage workers in the last fifty years we may say briefly that the trend has been just the opposite to that of children in school, as one would expect. The world has come to see now that the child worker is a school child out of his proper environment, to his own hurt and that of society. We have seen how notable has been the increase of children in the grade schools and secondary schools since the beginning of the present century. In that same period the number of children working for wages has declined by four fifths. The census of 1930 enumerated six hundred and sixty-seven thousand children under the age of sixteen in gainful employment. Fifty years earlier, in 1880, the child workers numbered 1,110,000 in a population only two fifths of the population in 1930. Had child labor in our own day maintained the level of half a century ago, the number of young workers in 1930 would have been not six hundred and sixty-seven thousand but 2,800,000. In this sense we may say justly that four fifths of the child workers have been eliminated. More than two million children have been removed from labor and transferred in the greater part to school. Our present efforts against child labor are directed towards the elimination of the remaining one fifth. It is the mopping-up sequel to a victory that had already been won in substance by the year 1930.

In the year 1880 out of every hundred children under the age of sixteen the gainfully employed were seventeen in number. In the year 1930 the workers were five in every hundred. These impressive gains were made in the two decades after 1910, in which year we find the proportion of child workers to be actually higher than it was thirty years before. Immigration in the intervening years continued to swell the ranks of young wage workers for a generation; but when we come to the year 1920 we find that the child workers have declined to less

than nine in the hundred—a cut of more than half since 1910. In another ten years this number was again cut almost in half, and we are down to the afore-mentioned five workers in every hundred children as recorded in the census of 1930.

Child labor, meaning the work of children under sixteen, is predominantly a farm problem. More than two thirds of the child workers in the year 1930 were in agriculture, where they numbered nearly half a million. Industry and mechanical occupations had less than seventy thousand child workers; trade, fifty thousand; domestic service, forty-five thousand; clerical occupations, sixteen thousand. Take the whole army of gainfully employed Americans in the year 1930, to the number of forty-nine millions. Then it will appear that children under the age of sixteen were represented in the following ratios in the different groups of occupations: manufacturing, one child in every two hundred workers; trade, one in one hundred and twenty; domestic service, one in one hundred and ten; clerical occupations, one in three hundred; transportation, one in four hundred and fifty. But in agriculture the child workers were one in twenty-two. If we group together all the occupations other than agriculture the child workers under sixteen years would be one in every two hundred. Proportionately, child labor is ten times as high on the farm as in all other forms of employment taken together.

The drive for the abolition of child labor by Constitutional amendment or regulatory legislation has been marked by an emotional coloring traceable in part to an inaccurate use of terms. The word "child" and the word "labor" have both been loosely employed. This is typified in the newspaper cartoons on the subject which commonly showed a very small child feeding a big factory machine; and the popular notion of the nature of the problem of child labor is no doubt that it is chiefly a factory problem, as in the sad days of the early factory system. But as we have seen, only one in every ten child workers in 1930 was engaged in manufacturing and mechanical industry; and actually two out of every three children working for pay were to be found on the farm. The second item of misunderstanding concerns the age of child workers. We have seen that public sympathy is enlisted against the employment of very little boys and girls, as actually depicted in cartoons or implied in the word "child." But the proposed Federal Child Labor Amendment would give Congress the power to prohibit the labor of boys and girls under eighteen. This age was once upon a time regarded as adult, and even today we treat it as Youth; it is not exactly childhood. The Amendment actually speaks of the labor of "persons under the

age of 18." Eighteen is the age at which women are free to marry in three fourths of the states.

All the probabilities are that the age of young people in the gainful occupations will continue to rise, but it will not be primarily the result of legislative action. The law will only register a secular advance. More than half of the population of high-school age, that is to say, between fourteen and seventeen, is already in high school. We may take it for granted that the country is set to bring the other half of its young people under eighteen to school. At the same time it is plain that the proposed Constitutional Amendment, first brought forward in 1924 and defeated in New York State as late as 1937, in a striking reversal by the Legislature under direct pressure of the Catholic Church, is doomed. The Amendment was dormant for nearly ten years after submission. It made rapid progress after 1933, and it seemed very likely to win in a final dash in 1937, following upon the great Roosevelt victory of the preceding November. But it was stopped in New York and Massachusetts, and it is hard to think that it will rise to another such peak in the immediate future.

The movement towards a shorter working week for all wage earners made progress over a long stretch of years before the forty-hour week became part of President Roosevelt's New Deal, and we can foresee the working age for young people going up without drastic legislative intervention. We see the steady advance under way when South Carolina in 1937 prohibits the labor of children under sixteen in factories, mills and mines except in special circumstances, meaning vacation time and after-school hours. It is a gain for South Carolina, but nothing is said of work on the farm or in the home. That will be the last battle of the child-labor movement.

5

The motion-picture theater is second only to the home as a meeting ground for adults and children. We have seen that in the gainful occupations the children are less than two out of every hundred workers. In the schools the proportion is very nearly reversed, and we have something like four adult teachers for every hundred children. But in the crowded temples of the silver screen young people are much more heavily represented. If a child is anybody under eighteen—as he is so often in child-labor discussions—then he is one out of every three motion-picture customers. If a child is anybody under thirteen he is still one in every ten patrons. Even the children between five and eight years supply three in every hundred movie patrons. We may say roughly that

the weekly film patrons under the age of thirteen are more than ten million, which is not far from one half of all the children between five and thirteen.

When we speak of the moving-picture theater as the chief meeting group for adults and children, next after the home, it is in a literal sense, and something more. Literally, physically, there is no other enclosure of walls and roof where adults and children meet on so nearly equal a numerical footing. In the nation at large in 1930, and therefore broadly speaking in every home, the persons under twenty were roughly forty per cent. In the movie palaces, as we have seen, the young people under eighteen are about thirty per cent of the public. The margin in favor of the home, while large, is by no means extraordinary. Next after the family circle and the film audience it would be the church which shows the highest ratio of children to adults. But if we omit the Sunday-school class, where the children meet by themselves, it is obvious that children do not constitute anything like a third or fourth of the ordinary church congregation.

This leads us to the second meaning of a common ground for adults and children in the motion-picture theater. By and large, the films serve up the same fare for adults and children. If there are special film shows for children it is in extent nothing like our separate juvenile literature. Here we are speaking of children under thirteen who are too young for *The Three Musketeers* and *Treasure Island*. Special books in great numbers are written for them. We have said that more than ten million children under the age of thirteen are in the film theater every week. Most of them may be accompanied by parents or an elder brother or sister. But the latter are not there in the same capacity in which adults attend a children's concert or a special children's stage performance. Elders and juveniles sit in the audience as equals.

This phenomenon of children and their elders nourished on the same emotional and intellectual fare is a problem which obviously affects both parties at interest. It is not the same case as that of the popular newspaper with its comic strips and other special features for the young reader. The newspaper is departmentalized, and the child who has made his daily study of the funny pictures does not go on to read the editorial page or the political news or very much of the criminal news or sports news; but the child in the film theater does not stop looking and listening when the heartier courses on the menu are reeled off. The child is as much a part of the Public to which Hollywood addresses itself as is his big brother or his mother in the seat next to him.

Obviously there is danger in exposing the child to adult tastes and

standards. Yet the danger is not as serious as it might be, and for two reasons. One, paradoxically enough, is the fact that there are so many children in the film theaters. If the children constituted a very small fraction of the aggregate film attendance, producers and public would leave them out of account. From the producers' side a numerically small juvenile clientele would not be worth keeping in mind; from the side of the public, chiefly of parents, the problem would not be a very big one. But when we find that out of, say, one hundred million film patrons a week the children under thirteen are more than ten million, the children under fifteen are close to twenty million, the young people under eighteen are one third of the whole audience, it is a situation of which producers and public are compelled to take cognizance. The former have a vast youthful market to consider. Parents and the community at large have a big social and ethical problem on their hands.

The motion-picture industry, therefore, urged on not too gently by parents and church organizations whenever Hollywood moves too slowly, has found it expedient to take note of the juvenile tastes and standards which hold for so large a part of their audiences. And it has been all the easier for Hollywood to cater to the juvenile mind because the intellectual and emotional level of the adult film audiences to start with is much nearer to the juvenile mind than in the old theater. In the films the pictures as pictures, the melodrama, the G-men, the comics, the hugely spectacular, will continue to set the tone because these are themes on which the adult mind comes closest to the child mind.

The problem of the child in the film theaters is largely a problem of adult civilization. The standards of the motion picture are being largely determined by the children.

6

It remains to say a few words about the celebrated American spoiled child. Today foreigners cite him less frequently than once upon a time as a characteristic product of our civilization, but he still ranks high among minor American constants.

This is not evident at first sight. The drift of the times everywhere would appear to be in our direction. The children of other nations seem today more spoiled, or as Europeans would have said formerly, more Americanized, than they were fifty years ago. Everywhere family discipline has been enormously relaxed. Particularly was the World War instrumental in fostering the independence of youth. European fathers and elder brothers were absent at the front. Children were called upon

to shoulder heavy responsibilities as breadwinners and war workers, with an inevitable rise in self-importance. The world's catastrophe was bound to bring forth a young generation, wise beyond its years and thoroughly skeptical of the wisdom of its elders. In this sense the self-reliance of American youth became a common phenomenon in Europe, and even in Asia. Our old American ideas on free comradeship between boys and girls made their way in the Old World, to be sure, without going all the way or even closely approaching our American norm. Nevertheless, it is freedom to a degree which European generations before the war would have called astounding.

But the postwar emancipation of European youth has, in later years, been more than lost. Upon young and old alike has descended the iron discipline of the new totalitarian regimes. Paternal authority has weakened since the war, but the state has come forward to claim rights over the child, and to load him with responsibilities undreamt of before the World War. It is best described by saying that military discipline has replaced parental discipline.

Drill has replaced behavior. As mere infants the children of the Continental nations are put into uniform as Pioneers, so to remain in uniform as Juniors, Youths and full-fledged Party members. They are subjected to a molding process of unprecedented scope and intensity, consciously directed towards suppressing the individual for the good of the commonwealth. The new totalitarianism removes the child from the influence of his parents at a tender age and so makes the spoiled child impossible in a double sense; for a spoiled child is a child spoiled by his parents. In the new authoritarian way of life the parents are themselves in tutelage. It is not for them to discipline their children who, in the last analysis, take orders from a military superior.

On the whole showing, therefore, the comparative status of the American child is freer than ever. The old American practice which made the child the center of the family is today reinforced by the new postwar doctrine which identifies the welfare of mankind with the welfare of Youth, and which exalts the wisdom of Youth above experience and age. The child counts for more than ever in the home because of his scarcity value, as we have pointed out earlier in this chapter. He consumes a larger part of the family budget and of the social budget. He is the subject of a vast amount of direct Child Study and group adjustment and indirect parental training. This is all additional to the regular school system, where we have seen the per capita cost of the child increase many times in the course of a generation. He is the subject, or victim, as not a few critics have said, of a vast amount of planning and experimenta-

tion. What we have said elsewhere about the Progressive Schools and the serious doubts to which they have given rise would apply with greater force still to the error of well-meaning parents in plying their children with implications of the new psychology. Neurologists have cried out against the mischief wrought by parents and teachers who probe for nonexistent horrors and perils in the souls of their children. That mischief, no doubt, would in time have assumed more serious dimensions if the economic collapse of ten years ago had not supervened to give many parents more immediate things to think about than the unexplored depths of their children's being. That same economic crisis brought many of the children face to face with responsibilities that would stand no nonsense.

7

A problem of special nature and yet in dimensions a mass problem concerns the children of the immigrant. It arose out of the vast influx from non-English-speaking countries which began in the early eighties of the nineteenth century. Between immigrant parents no longer in their first youth and their children who were brought here at an early age or were born here there stood the gulf of language and customs and manners. Thus the native-born child of foreign parents would be even less exposed to discipline than the spoiled child of native parents. He would be even more on his own. To be sure, he was less likely to be spoiled in the sense of being catered to and made the chief object of family ambition. In the earlier period of mass immigration we find child labor increasing, as the newcomers sought to hew out a place for themselves by mobilizing every member of the family. But by the second decade of the present century the older American tradition of schooling for children had begun to assert itself against the European peasant idea of exploiting children; child labor begins to drop. But even while the immigrants' children were being exploited by their parents they were acquiring the independence which comes from self-support. It fell in with the old American tradition.

For in essence the American spoiled child is the product of American opportunity, under which every man had his chance to rise in the world, and the opportunities were still greater for his children. Where every American boy was supposed to have a chance to be President and a still better chance to grow rich, it was inevitable that he should assume and be conceded the privileges of an heir presumptive. It is current doctrine among those who see a new era in America after 1929 that the age of Opportunity has come to an end. The horizons of our national

existence have shrunk to Old World dimensions. American Youth is no longer heir presumptive to any destiny: like its generation in the Old World it is heir only to the station of life into which it is born. But this is only an a priori doctrine fostered by the economic tribulations of the last ten years. Beneath the surface the old belief, which used to be called optimism and is now called illusion, is patently astir. As we enter upon another Presidential Campaign we need only look about us.

CHAPTER VI

Health

IN THE EARLY SUMMER of 1937 the American Medical Association at its annual meeting debated a resolution, introduced by the Medical Society of the state of New York, "that the health of the people is the direct concern of the Government and that a national health policy directed toward all groups of the population should be formulated." The representatives of the nation's medical profession formally approved the general principle that the public health is a matter of Government concern. They did not rally to the concrete proposals actually brought before the convention or known to be in the minds of the movers of the resolution. It was a program which included large Government appropriations for hospitals, medical research and medical education. The president of the American Medical Association argued that public health is certainly not a field hitherto removed from Government concern or Government action. To the question whether the citizen has a claim on his Government for personal medical care the answer would be in the affirmative, but it was the majority opinion at the American Medical Association meeting that this moral claim should be met in other ways than by creating a system of Government physicians and Government clinics.

In the last days of 1938 the American Medical Association, its officers and the editor of its official journal, were indicted for conspiracy in the District of Columbia. The alleged offense consisted in hostile activities directed against physicians participating in the movement known as group medicine or co-operative medicine. This was an arrangement under which the physicians entered into contractual relations with an organized body of prospective patients. Group medicine was one phase.

The pressure for increased Government activity was another. The question of compulsory health insurance was a third. They were aspects of a general movement in the direction of what came to be called socialized medicine. An amendment to the Constitution of the state of New York, adopted by the people in November 1938, declares that

the protection and promotion of the health of the inhabitants of the State are matters of public concern, provision for which shall be made by the State and by such of its subdivisions and in such manner and by such means as the legislature shall from time to time determine.

It is again the affirmation of a general principle without the enunciation of a specific program.

The new interest in socialized medicine may be said to have arisen primarily out of the new social temper created by the Depression and fostered by the policies of President Roosevelt. It is true that between 1929 and 1935 our voluntary contributions for the support of the hospitals of the nation declined by four fifths, from one hundred and thirty million dollars to twenty-five million dollars. If the future brought no revival in private aid the Government would obviously have to step in. The motivating force was fear of what lay ahead and not any damage actually recorded in the nation's health. The argument for socialized medicine could not take the ground that in the long test of years the existing system had broken down.

Health standards have shown a notable rise in the past fifty years. There was no one to take issue when the president of the American Medical Association, at the 1937 meeting, said:

Under proper standards of diet a race of people are being produced that are taller and stronger. Babies are being better born, with more graceful symmetry and more inherent beauty. The quality of life is being improved and the average length of life is being increased.

For the year 1936 the nation's death rate was 11.5. This was a rise from the preceding year and it was the highest rate since 1929 when it stood at 11.9. It is a striking fact that in the face of hard times the death rate had continued to fall. In 1933 it touched a low of 10.7 which was more than a full point below the prosperity year 1929. Time may conceivably justify the warnings issued by public-health workers against undue optimism. We have been asked to wait for the cumulative effects of the Depression to appear, as the gains achieved over many decades wear off, as health activities are curtailed and the results of prolonged underfeeding manifest themselves. Be that as it may the fact

we have to consider is that half a century ago, in 1890, the death rate for about one third of our population included in the Registration Area was very nearly twenty per thousand inhabitants. In 1901 it was 16.5, and then, at ten-year intervals, the rates are fifteen in 1910, thirteen in 1920, eleven in 1930. This is all the more impressive because with the years the so-called Registration Area came to include virtually the whole population. The more backward sections of the country, as they entered, would affect the national level adversely.

The story of the nation's death rate, slashed almost in half since 1890, is not peculiar to America of course. The record was equaled in England and surpassed in Germany during this period. A falling death rate has been a world-wide though not a universal phenomenon, accompanying a drop in the birth rate. This salvage of human life has been everywhere recognized as one of the main credit items in the record of the last half century; discontent in the United States stems from the feeling that still greater progress could have been made, and that the actual gains have not been evenly distributed. The death rate for Negroes is one third to one half higher than for white people. But even for them, seriously affected as they were by the great urban migration after the World War which filled up the big city slums, the death rate after 1920 went down sharply.

The principal gains registered in the remarkable decline of the nation's death rate have been scored in the early years of existence. The saving in children's lives has been enormous. At the beginning of the present century the annual number of deaths among children under five was forty-two in every thousand. Twenty years later, in 1921-25, the rate was down to twenty-three, and in 1933 to thirteen. The healthiest of all age classes, children between ten and fourteen, had less than three deaths for every thousand of their number at the beginning of the century. In 1933 even this low rate had been cut in half. For the principal mating years, from twenty to twenty-four, the deaths in the first period were six per thousand and in 1930-33 they were three.

Our victories in young life are familiar, but there is a prevalent notion that all the gains scored in the earlier years are lost after the onset of middle age; and there is even a widespread belief that middle-aged people die faster today than they did forty years ago. Everyone knows that great victories have been won in the fight against tuberculosis, but on the other hand there have been heavy losses in the so-called degenerative diseases, chiefly heart ailments and the dread cancer; often it is stated that such losses more than offset the gains in other fields.

This is not true. Continuing with our mortality rates for specified ages, we do find that beginning at the age of forty-five the earlier impressive gains suffer a notable shrinkage, but they do not disappear, and they are not even negligible. Comparing the first five years of the present century with 1930-33, we find that for all persons between the ages of thirty-five and forty-four the death rate has fallen from approximately ten to six. This is a gain of, roughly, forty per cent. On the other hand the rate for persons between forty-five and fifty-four has declined only from 14.4 to 12.2. This is a gain of only fifteen per cent, but it is a gain. The rate for the next age period, fifty-five to sixty-four years, has declined from 27.1 to 25.7. This is a gain of only five per cent; our margin has grown very narrow. Between sixty-five and seventy-four years the death rate forty years ago was fifty-five as against a rate in 1930-33 fluctuating between fifty-four and fifty-six. Only then, toward the very end of life, probably about the age of seventy, do we lose any advantage over the early years of the century. But obviously that is far from the common notion of the middle-aged dying faster than ever to-day.

2

College students are taller and more robust than their parents were in college. Ales Hrdlicka found a change in the newer American racial stocks towards the earlier physical American types marked by tall stature and a long and narrow skull structure. Franz Boas found that the American-born children of immigrants in New York show an increase in height and a sharper modeling of facial contours. In the early years of the century the sociologist E. A. Ross was painfully impressed by the dominant "moon face" type in New York, and the sharp divergence from the traditional rangy Yankee physique. But according to Hrdlicka and Boas, the descendants of these round-heads will be taller than their fathers and longer and narrower in the face. The chief cause will be food. Observers have found in England a direct connection between food and stature for the whole population. They have noted an increase in height among poor children when circumstances have brought about a better than average diet. As the scientists put the case, more and better food will not add to the stature of an individual beyond his predetermined height in the germ plasm, but an ample diet will prevent the stunting of individuals having a favorable original endowment.

In one very important sense, then, we have preventive medicine on a scale not always realized by advocates of socialized medicine. We have

socialized medicine when we strive for better housing, better food, better recreation facilities, and, beyond that, a shorter working day and better working conditions. The figures for health expenditure by state and local governments make quite a different impression if we read health activities in the narrow sense of health supervision, sanitation, hospitals and other obvious functions, or if we include the money that goes into parks, a large part of the money that goes into schools, water supply, pure-food inspection and tenement-house inspection. We may go on, in the case of New York, to include many million dollars in annual subsidies for rapid transit operation. The five-cent fare permits the working people of New York to live in better homes than once upon a time, and in the summer months the five-cent fare permits an enormous daily migration to the beaches and outlying parks. It is not only the Chinese who pay their doctors to be kept well, though in China it is a private enterprise. The money which American cities pay to keep their people well is socialized medicine in a very real sense.

Americans in the sesquicentennial year of the Federal Union were a younger-looking people than their grandfathers in the centennial year 1889. One reason, in the case of our men, is of course the beard. Pictures of John D. Rockefeller at different stages of his career show him looking much older at the age of twenty-five than at the age of forty. The beard and mustache of the earlier period are missing in the later photographs. It is the familiar story of the hairy football teams of the Seventies and Eighties. Today we are a clean-shaven people, but it is sometimes overlooked that the contrast is only with the period after the Civil War. If we go back to Andrew Jackson's time and the Federal Constitution in its semicentennial period, we are back again in the beardless age; and so virtually remain as we move back into the past. The Founding Fathers were clean shaven—Franklin, Washington, Madison, Hamilton, the Adamses, Jefferson. So it continued through the granite features of Daniel Webster and the leaner jaws of Clay and Calhoun until we find Abraham Lincoln flirting with whiskers at one period.

We distinguish here between youthfulness and health. English travelers of a hundred years ago and later were impressed by the unhealthy physique and physiognomy of the American people. As against the well-fed Pickwick and Cheeryble type of Englishman our own Colonel Jefferson Bricks and Hannibal Chollops stood out sallow and cadaverous. That would be largely the British view of our rawboned frontier type to the neglect of American physique nearer the Atlantic seaboard. Furthermore, or in fact primarily, it was a comparison between the middle-class

Englishman and the masses of the American population, and excluding the English masses.

The contemporary American male looks younger than his grandfather at the same age because of the disappearance of the patriarchal beard, but also because of the general prolongation of youth and middle age. This is even more true of the American woman by comparison with her mother and grandmother. It is mainly due to a notable decline in the frequency of childbearing and to a reduction of toil in the home. Migration from farm and village to the city is another factor. Fifty years ago less than fifteen per cent of the American people lived in cities of one hundred thousand inhabitants or more. In 1930 it was thirty per cent. We may say that roughly twice as many married women have profited by the easier housekeeping of urban life.

And if this is a younger-looking people than it was fifty years ago because it does not work so hard, it is also a people which makes a greater effort to feel and look younger. There is much greater emphasis on personal adornment. The beauty parlor, long an urban commonplace, has invaded the open country. There is no rural village without one of these institutions. In 1929 the value of cosmetic and perfume manufactures was nearly two hundred million dollars and the retail value obviously much larger. The quest of youthfulness in dress, appearance and manners has been satirized in the type of the flapper grandmother, but it is no exaggeration to say that it has pushed forward the frontiers of youth into middle age until middle age has been reduced to a narrow zone. People nowadays are young or youngish until they become, without an intervening stage, old people.

The so-called strain of modern urban life is real only when we eschew comparisons. Naturally, if we count our modern neuroses and forget the mental casualties which people formerly took for granted the score will run heavily against today. Once upon a time the village idiot was an accepted part of the normal life along with the village blacksmith and the village innkeeper. Today the mental defective is most often the inmate of an institution or in any event a problem; even as the ordinary backward child of once upon a time is now a problem child. That is the principal reason for the large number of immigrants in our insane asylums. No doubt the Central European peasant feels the strain of our high-speed industrial life; but chiefly it is a case of the afflicted immigrant finding a refuge in a public institution where formerly in his European village he would finish out his life under the family roof. For it is with mental care largely as with dental care. The size of the problem depends on the standards we set up. Outside of the United

States decayed teeth are still a part of man's normal lot. In the European view dental hygiene is analogous to cosmetics; it is an exercise in adornment.

Horn-rimmed spectacles in recent years may have largely replaced the gleam of gold-filled teeth as the hallmark of American civilization in foreign lands, but here, too, we have a rising health standard. Eye defects once regarded as normal are now rigorously hunted down in the schools and the home; though our national susceptibility to vogue does in some measure account for the owlish goggled population. We must look back to a past in which two of America's greatest historians, Prescott and Parkman, were victims of partial blindness. Parkman died in 1892 when the blind population was in the ratio of one in every twelve hundred persons. Forty years later the ratio was one in every nineteen hundred persons. The deaf-mute population declined from one in every fifteen hundred persons in 1890 to one in every twenty-four hundred persons in 1930. Such figures are wholly consistent with the discovery of great numbers of physically defective school children. Sometimes people will announce as high as eighty or ninety per cent of "defective" children, testifying to a perfectionist health standard undreamt of in other days, and for that matter, undreamt of even today in a good many quarters where humanitarian feelings are by no means absent. It is the case of our appalling number of "underfed" children frequently discovered by the diagnosticians, and so largely determined by very special notions of what is a well-nourished child.

The historic formula for bodily affliction speaks of the halt, the lame, the blind. By the number of blind and deaf persons in the community the health of the American people in 1930 would be two thirds as high again as it was forty years earlier, and it is not undue optimism to suppose that improvement will move with accelerated speed as progress continues in the science and art of dietetics. A generation ago the eminent ophthalmologist, Karl Kohler, held the view that eye disease would disappear when the perfect diet had been developed. Diet has been directly correlated with teeth, and one school of dentists has broken entirely with the hallowed toothbrush as a defense against caries, laying all the stress on proper feeding.

One health index of which we have no reason to boast is our high death rate in childbirth. In the general mortality rate we stand with the leading nations but we are with the most backward of countries in this saddest of all casualties. Here the rate actually went up from six lost mothers for every thousand births in 1915 to seven in 1929. The best we can show is only a slight gain in one or two states. The higher figures

are no doubt explained in part by new states entering the Registration Area after 1915, with lower health standards. Childbirth mortality in the backward states would discount the familiar argument that our poor showing for the whole country is due to the adverse effects of the pace of American life on the nervous organization of our women. The pace of life is fastest in our large cities. It is slowest in the rural section of the South and Southwest where the maternity death rate is highest.

Between health in the cities and in the rural areas the advantage is normally with the open country; but for special classes and in times of emergency the scales tip the other way. In 1920 the death rate for infants under one year was seventy-six for the rural white population and eighty-seven in the urban areas. In 1925 the margin in favor of the rural population was down to two. In 1930 the advantage had shifted to the cities where it remained through the worst years of the Depression. That the effects of unemployment were more successfully combated in the cities would be indicated by the Negro infant mortality. In 1920 the infant deaths among urban Negroes were one hundred and fifty-eight for every thousand births against one hundred and eighteen in the rural areas. Incidentally the Negro urban rate, it will be noted, is nearly double the white urban rate. In 1925 the excess of urban infant deaths over rural was twenty-five. For the years 1932-34 the average urban excess was ten. This will be easily understood when one recalls the different standards applied in distributing relief to the Negro people in the North and the South; though it was not the only factor. By this time the new Negro population in the North was better immunized to urban living, and a slowing down of the inrush from the South brought some relief in housing congestion. The picture would not be complete without taking note that in the year 1934 Negro infant mortality was one third less than in 1920 in the cities and one quarter less in the country.

The case of the Negro might be made the text for some general conclusions about the health of the whole American people. The yardstick by which progress is measured today consists less in our gains over the past than in our estimate of possibilities in the future. Discontent is based not on what we have done but on what remains to be done; and in large measure this is as should be if the nation is not to become the victim of a mistaken complacency. But it is only right that we shall have a true picture of the state of things against which discontent speaks out. People continued to cry out against child slavery in the factories, although four fifths of all child labor had been wiped out in the two decades before 1930 and only a very small number of children remained in the factories; one sets out from the perfectly reasonable con-

viction that there must be no children whatever in the factories. Negro mortality rates make somber reading when compared with the white population, but produce quite a different impression by comparison with the Negro's own past.

Next to the Negroes, the largest group in America's underprivileged population consists of the foreign-born, and especially the so-called newer immigration from Central and Eastern Europe. Since we are here concerned with the question of public health we may apply, in a single instance, the test of infant mortality which we have employed for the Negro people. Infant mortality rates among the American-born children of immigrant mothers have always shown a wide range of variation between national groups. In the year 1916 the infant death rate for the offspring of mothers born in Scandinavia was sixty-eight for every thousand births. The rate for the children of mothers born in Poland was one hundred and forty-eight, or more than double the Scandinavian rate; or we may call it, crudely, a spread of eighty points. In 1932 the low record was made by Russian-Jewish mothers with a rate of forty-three. The high record was made by Polish mothers with a rate of sixty-one. Two things will be noted. In 1932 the spread between high and low was less than a quarter of what it was in 1916. In the second place, the highest (worst) death rate in 1932 was lower (better) than the best showing in 1916. There was a lift in the whole immigrant level, and the largest measure of improvement was shown by the most backward elements.

That is one part of the truth about health progress in our own times. Another part of the truth would take the form of a reminder that in the field of infant mortality there is still room for improvement. New Zealand in the year 1915 had an infant death rate of fifty-two against one hundred in the United States. In 1937 New Zealand was down to thirty-two against our own sixty. Starting from a much more advanced base, New Zealand might have been expected to move more slowly. Actually it moved ahead as rapidly as we did.

After eight years of business depression and mass unemployment the health of the American people showed no ill effects. If this was still the momentum of many years of effort before the crash of 1929 then it is a point to be kept in mind when indictments are presented against the pre-1929 social system. A social system which builds up a national reserve of public health capable of withstanding nearly ten years of economic crisis has much to be said for it.

CHAPTER VII

Housing

AT THE BEGINNING of his second term, in the early months of 1937, President Roosevelt summed up in a compact and vivid phrase the formidable task of social betterment which confronted this nation. Mr Roosevelt found one third of the American people to be "ill nourished, ill housed, ill clad." Of these three gross shortcomings in the American standard of living it is obvious that disagreement can arise least often in the field of housing. On the subject of underfeeding there has always been a wide difference of opinion among the specialists; and it would be even more so in the matter of dress.

Housing presents a much more concrete problem. Crowding, sanitation, light and air can be accurately measured. When we speak of the number of city inhabitants to the acre, or the number of persons to a room, we are on much surer ground than in the mathematics of calories and clothing budgets. In the rural areas we are dealing with objective conditions in the cabin homes of the Appalachian mountain people or the Negro share croppers. Here, too, to be sure, there is a sufficiently wide play of opinion; as when old-fashioned folk still recall that Abraham Lincoln came out of a log cabin and John D. Rockefeller out of a very humble home. But when all is said and done, the amount of floor space, divided by the size of a family, is a satisfactory approach to the housing problem.

There is a Negro tenement block in the Harlem section of Manhattan Island which the City Planning Committee of New York in September 1935 found to contain 3,871 residents. It is one of the large blocks which run west to east for more than three times the length of the standard New York block of twenty to the mile, and would have an area of

approximately five acres. The density of population in this nucleus of Harlem and the most congested spot in the whole city would thus be something more than seven hundred persons to the acre.

Once upon a time it was a good deal worse on Manhattan Island. In 1890 there were many blocks in the old Eleventh Ward in the lower part of the island with eight hundred to one thousand persons to the acre. This density in 1935 would have given us on that Harlem block between forty-five hundred and five thousand people. Eight other Harlem blocks in 1935 had six hundred people to the acre. In 1890 there were whole areas in the Tenth Ward with six hundred and twenty-five people to the acre, and the rate for the whole Tenth Ward was five hundred and twenty-five people to the acre. These figures are to be found in the Legislative Tenement House Committee's report of 1894, a social document deserving to be classed with the historic studies of life and labor in London, conducted about this time by Charles Booth.

As late as 1910, it appears from a study by the Slum Clearance Committee, congestion on the lower East Side of New York showed only a faint improvement. South of Fourteenth Street and east of the Bowery there were areas showing as high as eight hundred and seventy-five people to the acre, or one fourth worse than Harlem's worst today. The range for the whole section was from that maximum down to five hundred persons to the acre. As late as 1910 the average density for the whole East Side would be worse than anything in Harlem today with the exception of one block.

Twenty years later, in 1930, a striking change had come over the face of the East Side. Only one small patch showed a population density equal to the average density for the whole region twenty years earlier. Large areas showed an average of less than one hundred and fifty persons to the acre, a figure hitherto unknown on the East Side. We may sum up the change for all of Manhattan Island in terms of "tracts" or definite units of area employed by students of the subject. In 1910 there were two hundred and fourteen such tracts; and fifty of these, one in every four tracts, assayed three hundred and fifty persons or more to the acre. In 1930 the island was apportioned into two hundred and sixty-seven tracts. The tracts with three hundred and fifty people or more were eleven in number, or one in every twenty-five tracts. In 1910 there were twenty-four tracts with four hundred and fifty persons or more to the acre. In 1930 there was just one tract of that density in all the two hundred and sixty-seven tracts. Immigration from Europe created terrific congestion in New York up to 1915, and Negro migration from the South has operated since 1915, but with far less depressing results as we

have seen. In 1890 our own Eleventh Ward was more thickly congested than the three worst districts of Bombay in India; and our Tenth Ward was not far behind. Harlem's worst block today is not representative of the city.

2

Three out of every four American families live in a one-family house. Two of these three families own the house in which they live. We had in the year 1930 something less than thirty million families, and to accommodate them we had something over twenty-five million occupied dwellings of which nearly twenty-three million were individual homes. After 1920 nearly one half of all new city dwellings were one-family homes and another fifteen per cent were two-family homes, though the trend toward multiple-family homes was accentuated with the boom years. The habit of the separate roof was far from extinct in 1930. When depression struck the country in that year, and home building in the cities shrank to less than fifteen per cent of the preceding ten-year average, it was the one-family houses that continued to be built.

Philadelphia, among the older cities, leads in separate homes but is by no means in a class by itself. Baltimore is not far behind with seven in every eight families in separate homes and another ten per cent in two-family homes. For that matter, if we regard the two-family house as standing nearer to the individual home than to the apartment house then New York itself has more than three families out of four in a small dwelling house. More than half of all New York families live in one-family homes. To be sure this average is established by the outlying boroughs. Four out of every ten families in Bronx and Brooklyn and seven out of every ten families in Queens live in detached homes, but in Manhattan it is only one in every four families; though even that ratio for Manhattan may come as a surprise. Chicago has four out of every five families in small homes sheltering one or two families.

First place for individual homes in the whole country does not belong to Philadelphia but to Los Angeles among our ten principal cities. In the California city ninety-four families in every hundred live in a separate home, and another four families live in a two-family house. The case of Los Angeles is significant in the same sense that Detroit is significant. They are the new giant communities of the new industrial age. Their fabulous growth came in the period after 1910, and we might expect to find their people ensconced in the newer type of home, namely the apartment house. But we have seen that Los Angeles has

only 2.4 per cent of her families in anything larger than a two-family house. In Detroit the apartment-house families are less than one in twenty, and in every five families four have a separate roof. If we say that a city with less than ten per cent of its families in apartments is a small-house community then there are only three big cities that belong in the other class. Boston has twenty-five per cent of her people in apartments and New York has somewhat less. Chicago has twenty per cent. On the other side of the line, under ten per cent, are our seven other big cities.

The nation in the year 1929 is estimated to have spent thirteen billion dollars, out of a total income of eighty billion dollars, on housing, fuel and light. In the year 1891 a workingman's family may have spent fifty per cent of its income on food and twenty per cent on housing. At the beginning of the century the ratio was forty-three per cent on food and twenty-four per cent on housing. In 1929 Detroit automobile employees spent thirty-two per cent on food and twenty-nine per cent on housing. Wage earners in five Pennsylvania cities in 1937 spent thirty-six per cent on food and twenty-seven per cent on housing. Negro families in this inquiry spent as much on rent as on food because of the common practice by which higher rentals are exacted from colored tenants for equal accommodations. Of white working-class families in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh seven in every eight lived in a separate house or two-family house. For white and Negro families alike, running water and flush toilets in the house were found in practically every case. Nine houses in ten in Philadelphia and seven in ten in Pittsburgh had running hot water. Electric light was available in ninety-five per cent to one hundred per cent of all houses in both cities, and gas or electric stoves for ninety-seven per cent of white families and about eighty per cent of Negro families. Refrigeration was practically universal. There was a telephone for one in every five white families in Philadelphia and one in every three Pittsburgh families, but among Negroes the telephone families were only one in twenty-five Philadelphia families and one in five Pittsburgh families. By a combined index of inside flush toilet, running hot water, electric light, and gas or electric kitchen, the qualifying families would be nine in every ten white families in Philadelphia, eight in every ten in Pittsburgh and seven in every ten Negro families in both cities.

This glimpse of Pennsylvania housing standards makes it clear that the nation's housing problem, despite the very real factor of city slums, is far from being exclusively an urban problem. In a survey of living conditions among three hundred and thirty-six thousand workers' families, described in a public address by the U. S. Commissioner of

Labor Statistics in the Summer of 1937, few of the families had sanitary plumbing, running water, telephones and adequate refrigeration. A very different picture is furnished by our Pennsylvania study. But the Commissioner of Labor's description might well apply to conditions in some of our mining towns and in the smaller and rawer mill towns of the South.

Specialists have a way sometimes of being puzzled by what everybody knows. Students of city planning will occasionally stop to ask what makes people in the cities move away from the center of town to the outlying neighborhoods. Is it because people want to live in better homes, or is it the automobile? In the case of New York it is plainly not the automobile that has taken population away from Manhattan, but a much older interest and preoccupation, namely the Child. The years after 1920 were a time of so-called sophistication, but in precisely those years millions of Americans moved out from the congested center of cities to newer neighborhoods where there was more air, light and play space for the children. This has been a world-wide manifestation, observed in Shanghai and London and Berlin as in New York and Boston. The principal factor everywhere has been the development of rapid transit. What transportation means is shown in the case of Staten Island, the most beautiful and the emptiest of New York boroughs. In the decade after 1920 Staten Island, accessible from the city only by ferry across the waters of New York Bay, gained forty thousand residents. In the same period Brooklyn gained half a million, the Bronx more than half a million, and Queens six hundred thousand.

The family trek from crowded Manhattan north and east through the tunnels and across the bridges reflected a rising standard of general well-being, aided and abetted by the Profit Motive. Small armies of real-estate promoters and contractors year after year built solid square miles of single-family homes, two-family homes and apartment houses. They built too rapidly as events showed. When the depression came most of the real-estate operators went into bankruptcy, a great many small home owners had a hard time keeping their homes, and some of them lost their homes. But in the long run a great work was accomplished. Between 1920 and 1931 there were built in New York City apartment homes with 1,750,000 rooms and individual homes with several hundred thousand rooms. In those ten years Manhattan Island lost more than four hundred thousand in population. If this borough had grown apace with the rest of the city it would have had, after 1930, a million more people than it actually had in 1930, and conditions in the poorer sections would have been intolerable.

Not that housing conditions in New York approach the ideal. In the city's five boroughs towards the end of the 1930s there were still five hundred and twenty-five thousand old-law apartments in about sixty-five thousand tenement buildings, all of them erected before the year 1901, some of them before 1879. In the year 1910 the old-law apartments numbered six hundred and forty-one thousand, and there is some ground for the caustic reminder that the slums of New York are being liquidated at the rate of seven tenths of one per cent a year; at this pace it would require a century to wipe out the old tenements. The work has been speeded up in recent years. Beginning in 1935 there was a notable rise in the number of tenement buildings abandoned or demolished. Revenue would not pay for the cost of repairs and safety improvements required by law.

On the other side of the ledger is the fact that against five hundred and twenty-five thousand old-law apartments in 1935 New York had nine hundred and five thousand newer apartments. There were almost two families in a modern apartment building for every one in an old-law tenement. To be sure, the technical distinction between old-law and new-law homes does not tell the whole truth. Many of the new-law buildings show the effects of time or of hard usage by tenants of a type not wholly accustomed to urban living. New slum conditions are thus being created, though on a far smaller scale than in our past experience. It is to a very considerable extent a problem in education.

3

President Roosevelt's special message on housing, sent to Congress in the last days of November 1937, envisaged a great construction program involving the expenditure of twelve to sixteen billion dollars of private capital over a period of five years. Not many months earlier Mr Roosevelt had drawn a grim picture of one third of a nation ill fed, ill clad and ill housed, with the very strong implication that this regrettable state of affairs was largely due to the subordination of social ideals to private interest in the past. If our negligence in providing adequate housing for all the people was to be remedied, the President's tone in the early months of 1937 suggested, it would have to be done chiefly by public agencies or, at least, by public effort. A different note is struck in President Roosevelt's message of November. It stressed private initiative as the secret of a successful housing program, and in one brief passage the President, whether intentionally or not, may be said to have summed up the whole case for the Profit Motive. He wrote:

Housing construction has not kept pace with either the needs or the growth of our population. From 1930 to 1937 inclusive, the average annual number of new dwelling units constructed in the United States was 180,000 as contrasted with an annual average of 800,000 in the seven years previous to 1930. In other words, we could build over the next five years 3,000,000 or 4,000,000 housing units which, at a moderate estimate of \$4,000 per unit, would mean spending from twelve billion to sixteen billion dollars.

An annual average of eight hundred thousand new homes between 1923 and 1930 means more than five and a half million new homes for the American people, or a new home for one in every five American families built in the space of seven years. This is not necessarily inconsistent with the thesis of one third of a nation ill housed. In theory we might build twenty million new houses before we have begun to tap the lowest one third of a nation of thirty million families. In practice it is another matter. We cannot build five and a half million new homes for any one class in the nation without thereby lifting the general level of housing for the whole nation, though no doubt in varying degree from place to place and class to class. If we assume that these millions of new homes were entirely absorbed by the upper two thirds of the American people the effect must nevertheless have been to leave the lower one third of the nation less ill housed than before. Whatever creates employment and augments pay rolls is bound to raise housing standards along with food standards and dress standards and the whole level of existence. The stimulus may come from large-scale home building, or automobile construction, or prosperity on the farm, or any other specific cause which whips up a stagnant economic system and sends the blood coursing once more through the veins of a nation. This truth was recognized by President Roosevelt when he brought forward his grandiose housing program less for its own sake than as a means of combating the severe industrial recession which overtook the country in the summer of 1937.

The dimensions of the housing problem are large enough to permit, and even to demand, more than one approach. Private philanthropy or Government subsidy may be unavoidable in dealing with the worst of slum conditions. Private initiative with Government co-operation in the form of lower interest charges, tax exemption or minor tax privileges, will build a great many more homes. The vast majority of new homes will be built in the future, as in the past, by private initiative without Government favor and for the purpose of making a profit. That housing scheme is the best which builds most houses. The United States Housing Authority was set up by Act of Congress in 1937 with an operating fund

of half a billion dollars to be disbursed partly in outright grants, partly in loans, with a maximum cost of five thousand dollars per family unit. This apparently contemplates the construction of one hundred thousand homes over a period of three years. Thirty to forty thousand slum dwellings a year replaced by civilized housing connote an impressive volume of human well-being; but it is not a pace that will solve a nation's housing problem. Thirty to forty thousand homes a year built by the United States Housing Authority would be five per cent of the eight hundred thousand homes built every year for seven years prior to 1930, as President Roosevelt reminded Congress.

CHAPTER VIII

Food

CHANGES IN the nation's dietary have been observed in the last fifty years, but they are minor changes. The basic popular appetite is the same. The American people consumes less meat, and particularly less beef, than it used to, but compared with other countries this is still the meat-eating nation. Dining habits are in essence what they were a hundred years ago. The lunch-counter tradition, if anything, has made gains over the regular dinner table. Drinking is still emphatically vertical.

In March 1935 a poll of eighteen hundred members of the Town Hall Club in New York City showed a heavy majority for steak as the favorite main dish and apple pie as the favorite dessert. Similar tests among the Wall Street eating clubs showed the same persistence of steak and apple pie. In the case of the financial district we may assume that the successful men who voted were old enough to have grown up in the cattle range and beef civilization of a generation ago. It is somewhat harder to explain the Town Hall Club whose members are younger and largely engaged in writing, publicity, social service, and so live presumably in the van of progress. We are prepared to find the taste of Mother's apple pie lingering on the palates of the older generation. It is surprising, half a century after the disappearance of the last Frontier and a century and a quarter after the disappearance of the Federalist party, to find that urban sophisticated Americans still adore the steaks of the Western plains and the apple pie of New England. It is more than likely that in the vicinity of "Red" Union Square in New York City a poll in the manner of senior-class polls would show: favorite book, *Das Kapital*; favorite food, steak; favorite dessert, apple pie. A poll con-

ducted by the National Restaurant Association in 1936 showed steak running neck and neck with corned beef and cabbage for first place. Participating in the vote were Congressmen, governors, presidential candidates, businessmen, teachers, writers, athletic coaches.

To be sure, the traditional American dietary has not assimilated the newer ethnic stocks without being affected to some extent by the newcomers. It is difficult to apportion credit in precise degree between the automobile and the German strain in our population for the rise of the meat sausage and the chopped-meat sandwich, the frankfurter and the hamburger. The grilled sausage inside a split white roll had attained sufficient prestige to be served by the wife of the President of the United States to her picnic guests, the King and Queen of Great Britain; yet the picnic parties at Hyde Park wound up with pie and coffee. Eminent public persons are much less often photographed for the newspapers in the act of dining on a frankfurter roll than they are shown rejoicing in great slabs of watermelon. Beef is still the nation's first love, and among subsidiary dishes the great national triad is still pie, watermelon and corn on the cob. A formidable contender is ice cream.

The years have come and gone, and with them the Prohibition experiment and predicted aftereffects of all kinds; but we still like to drink standing up against a bar instead of sitting at a café table as the European peoples do. One might go further and say that when we do sit down for the purpose of taking meat and drink we prefer to sit down on a stool before a counter instead of on a chair at a table. Mark Twain, shortly after the Civil War, drew a poignant contrast between American railway passengers wolfing food at the depot lunch counter in ten minutes and the civilized Europeans taking half an hour to dine comfortably at the railroad restaurant tables. Since then the counter or bar tradition has been enormously reinforced by the efflorescence of the drugstore food counter and the admission of women to the saloon bar as an aftermath of Prohibition. It is true that as a concession to the female trade there are stools in front of the bar, and the drinking is to that extent horizontal rather than vertical; but it is more appearance than reality. The crux of the matter is the counter or bar versus the table. The counter is triumphant in the drugstore, in the post-Repeal cafés and bars, in the lunch wagons and roadside food stands that flourish in our automobile civilization.

The bar-and-counter tradition is a pioneer tradition. It has persisted because of a basic economic factor in American life, the high cost of personal service which largely accounts for the development of labor-saving machinery in America, including housekeeping machines. The

bar-and-counter habit is economical. A bartender or a cook behind a counter can serve many more customers than a waiter at a table. The man behind the counter operates on interior lines, as we learned to say in the World War.

A second reason for the counter habit is the character of the national dietary. Here it is a case of reciprocal forces, the counter influencing the food and being influenced by it. Ice cream in solid form and in soda is an important part of our luncheon menu. Liquid luncheons are often hard to distinguish from liquid refreshments. A very busy man will lunch upon a glass of malted milk. If he has a little more time at his disposal he will round out his meal with a piece of pie à la mode which is a globe of ice cream surmounting a cut of pie like an Oriental dome. For women and boys and girls a standard luncheon is a sandwich and an ice-cream soda, a combination that still makes the foreigner wonder if there ever can be such a thing as American civilization. An elderly gentleman will lunch comprehensively on a piece of cantaloupe, a sandwich and huckleberry pie à la mode. As we began by saying, it is hard to say how far the national passion for sweets has been stimulated by eating at counters, and how far the counter is a natural dining surface for a nation whose solid food is so often hard to distinguish from a dessert or confection. Americans eat rapidly off counters because they get their nourishment in highly concentrated form. They get it in meat and in sweets, absorbing energy which other peoples must derive from filling quantities of bread and other flour pastes and vegetables.

The same appetite for concentrated stimulant, for the quick result, for the "kick," is revealed, of course, in the drinking habits of the nation. We are more than ever a hard-liquor people. In the long fight for repeal of the Prohibition Amendment from 1920 to 1933 the advocates of repeal were at pains to dissociate themselves from the old-time saloon, and much was heard of light wines and beer as an ideal to which the American people could be won over from distilled liquor. The mild alcoholic contents of malt and light wines were part of the civilized pleasures of the table and social communion instead of a means to excitement; but experience since Repeal shows that we are not fond of wines. To be sure, wine is served much more frequently than once upon a time at dinner tables on social occasions, but it is doubtful whether this represents a real conversion to the juice of the grape. It is much more probably a survival of Prohibition days when it became the mode to serve wine at dinner as a protest. As we recede from Prohibition the consumption of wine in the country may be expected to decline. The figures for beer drinking are far below what they were before Prohibition. Thus

we have the striking, though not astonishing, fact that the arrival in the last fifty years of many million immigrants from the wine and beer countries of Europe has not made a deep impression on the national taste. The old American habit of hard liquor has been impressed on the newcomers, or in any event on their children.

Nor is there reason to expect that in the course of time the nation's habits in food and drink will show a change towards the more leisurely habits of the European peoples. More leisure we unquestionably shall have, as in fact we already have achieved it with the five-day, forty-hour working week for so large a section of the population; but it is far from certain that we shall learn to spend our greater leisure in leisurely fashion. A long two-day week end may become a week end crowded with things to do, with something doing every minute. For the year 1960 the automobile makers predict thirty-seven million cars in the country. The nation debates and plans super-highways, intra-urban, interurban and national; when these highways come they will be used to capacity. The automobile trailer is an ominous sign. In itself the trailer should be a moderating influence on our furious tempo. The trailer should mean turning one's back on Success and towards contentment with little; be it ever so humble, there's no place like a trailer. It should mean the broad highway and the lingering camp by the wayside, with no special objective and no time schedule. Perhaps in the course of time it may come to that. Ultimately the great seasonal migration by trailer to Florida and California in Winter and to Maine and the national parks in Summer may induce a reflective, lazy way of life in a large section of the American people; but as yet one only hears disquieting talk of how fast as well as cheaply one may go by trailer. That the trailer will reinforce the national habit of quick eating and drinking there can hardly be any doubt. Housekeeping facilities on the trailer, though perhaps complete, are extremely compact. Large stocks of food cannot be carried. Dining-room accommodations are restricted. The prospect is one of a life of picnic meals, not in lazy gypsy-fashion by the brookside but in swift American-fashion from the roadside food stand. This leaves out of consideration the greater changes that airplane travel may bring in the next twenty years. It is all very well to speak of breakfasting in New York and eating dinner in Los Angeles. Neither meal is likely to be a leisurely civilized exercise as prelude and epilogue to three thousand miles in the air at two hundred and fifty miles an hour.

When the Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act of 1938 was in the Senate an amendment was inserted by Senator Borah of Idaho, which in the opinion of many friends of pure-food legislation might go far towards

crippling the whole Act. The Amendment provided that food producers accused of violating the provisions of the law should be brought to trial "within reasonable proximity to their place of business." Critics feared that this would array all the local economic interests with the defense and virtually prevent a conviction. Here would be a statesman of the eminence and integrity of Senator Borah apparently taking his stand with the narrow interest of Idaho apple-growers against the general public.

Thirty years earlier the campaign for pure-food laws under Theodore Roosevelt received impetus from Upton Sinclair's sensational novel, *The Jungle*, describing conditions in the Chicago stockyards. There were evils then in the food industry, and there are evils now, no doubt; but there was crusading hysteria then and there is no lack of it now. One thing to be kept in mind is that in pure-food-and-drug legislation the real impelling force is to be found not in actual horrifying conditions but in the rising standards of our modern life. A generation educated to the ideal of sterile cleanliness in individual containers for its food, drugs, cosmetics, toilet articles, shirts and haberdashery will obviously regard as sins against standard purity things which in less prosperous climes would be regarded as normal. The problem of pure food and drugs must be studied against a national background of dominant sanitary plumbing which a critical Europe even now refuses to admit as a real test of high civilization. To put it bluntly, something of gadgetry enters into the case. England had the problem of food frauds and still has it. In 1877 nearly twenty per cent of all English food samples were adulterated. By the year 1904 it was down to 8.5 per cent with the heaviest incidence in milk, wines and beer. Fraud in England is heavier in the drugs than in the foods; and so it is with us today, where the chief emphasis is on the patent medicines, the cure-alls. A new field of activity has opened up with the cosmetics, following on the enormous growth of the beauty industry.

The American public has to be protected against its own prosperity. Our rising food and drug standards are like our housing standards and like our medical college standards. A new country or a poor country must be content with less than the best. A backward country like old Russia had to develop a type of medical practitioner who stood halfway between the doctor and the barber-surgeon or trained nurse. Pioneer America had to resort to patent medicines for self-cure. As the country filled up and grew richer the demand grew for better doctors; and at the turn of the century we began to raise the standards of medical education. It is not wholly a case of unchecked greed in the food,

drug and cosmetics industries. To some extent it is the upward surge of large sections of the population to higher levels of consumption, calling forth rapid expansion of production, enormous outputs, great wastes. After all, the Idaho apple-sprayers of Senator Borah's special care do furnish the American people with cheap and wholesome apples. If large quantities of inferior cosmetics come on the market one must balance against the fractional harm which they do the vast amount of satisfaction they give to millions of women of small means. Capitalism and competition should be accorded something of the same tolerance in waste and excess that is demanded for other economic systems. It is with our pure-food standards as with the familiar plaint against the rape and plunder of America's forests. The indictment omits to take note of the homes for a hundred million people built out of the plundered forests.

CHAPTER IX

Play

ENGLISH VISITORS express an opinion widely shared in this country when they say that Americans are not an active outdoor people. We would rather watch games than play them. Foreign observers pass easily from our highly organized commercial college football to the play of children in municipal playgrounds. Apparently they find nothing in between.

One cannot altogether blame the friendly English visitor for falling in so readily with the doctrine that Americans are a nation of vicarious sportsmen, mere seat-warmers at games, almost a democratic replica and enlargement of decadent Roman aristocracy lolling on the cushioned seats of the amphitheater to watch the barbarian gladiators. It is hard for the English visitor—and for that matter for any European visitor—to rid himself of ancient notions about America. The pattern set by the earliest English travelers a century ago is still remarkably potent. It is a rare English author who tries to write American talk and does not fall a victim to the I-guess and I-reckon style of seventy-five years ago.

In this special instance of America and the outdoor life the foreign visitor found himself as late as the 1930s as one with native opinion. Fashionable discontent with the general scheme of American life took note, among other things, of our supposed vicarious play. It was part of the revolt against Babbitry. Because the Babbitts of America were mad about golf the rebel critics developed a passion for hill climbing with a knapsack and other primitive exercises. This would have been quite proper if the critics had not proceeded to argue that anyone who did not take long walks with a knapsack did not really like to play

active games for himself. Four thousand private golf clubs with more than a million members, in the year 1930, supplemented by five hundred and fifty municipal golf links and seven hundred private commercial golf courses were completely forgotten in the argument. It was remembered only that Americans liked to watch baseball games—the active sand-lot and amateur baseball teams were forgotten, too—and to watch football games.

A far different picture is drawn in the chapter on "Recreation" in the monumental *Recent Social Trends*. A brief summary would show on or about the year 1930:

One thousand tennis clubs with sixty thousand members, and on the public tennis courts about 1,200,000 players.

Two hundred and fifty thousand registered motor boats. With our wealth, up to 1930, and our talent for mechanics the motor boat was growing at the expense of the simpler sailboat, rowboat and canoe.

Thirty-five hundred public and private swimming pools.

More than two hundred municipalities with public beaches, and of these eighty-one cities reported an attendance of forty million.

More than seven million hunting and fishing licenses.

Two million persons camping out in the national forests in the summer of 1929, and more than a million persons in organized camps elsewhere.

It is true that in the football season of 1930 the spectators numbered more than 3,250,000. The baseball spectators in the major leagues and the principal minor leagues numbered fifteen million. But from our figures it will be seen that the camping population—in organized camps only—equaled the football spectators, and the shooting and fishing licenses easily outweigh the baseball spectators. Fifteen million baseball spectators mean perhaps thirty million spectator-hours. If a gun or fishing license means on the average two days out in the open in the course of a Summer then seven million such licenses might mean one hundred and fifty million active hours in the fields or woods. Critics were ready enough to cite firearms as a proof that we are still a primitive people with a terrific homicide rate. Critics forgot our primitive passion for firearms when it was a question of millions of men out in the woods with a shotgun. Critics forgot the millions of Americans with fishing tackle.

This leaves out of account the automobile, the omnipresent factor in American life that so definitely refuses to be left out of account. The millions of campers mentioned a little while ago must have been almost wholly motorists. In Summer the automobile visitors in the national parks and forests are between thirty and forty millions. Perhaps five

million American automobiles enter Canada in the course of a year. Here is plain evidence of a formidable amount of outdoor Summer activity. For that matter, it is the automobile as a whole, twelve months in the year and every day in the week, that gives us the picture of a nation engaged in a game or sport or play on a huge scale. Driving a car is not so active as football or tennis, but it is a game, a passion, and to a very considerable extent an activity. It surely is as strong a passion and as active an occupation as the Derby horse race which draws a million Englishmen to Epsom Downs. Indeed, if the zest of a game is to some extent in the attendant risk, as some people aver, then there is no game in the world that can compare for risk and peril with the fun of driving a car. In the United States we pay annually a price of approximately forty thousand lives for the pleasure.

In one respect it is true that Americans are not so fond of the outdoors as the English. Visitors point out that we do not like to eat and drink in the open air. The institution of the picnic is well known over here, but afternoon tea in the garden or even family meals in the English fashion are still the practice of a few in the more sophisticated areas of New England. Large-scale family dining in the open-air cafés on the Germanic fashion is unknown, and even in the large cities every Spring sees a campaign for the promotion of the sidewalk café which so far has not registered any startling victories.

England has about fourteen hundred hours of sunshine a year. New York has the same amount of sunshine as Italy, about twenty-six hundred hours a year, or sixty per cent of the possible annual maximum. Los Angeles has more than three thousand hours of sunshine a year, seventy-two per cent of the possible maximum and almost evenly distributed through the year. London in the six Fall and Winter months of 1935-36 had sixteen per cent of possible sun against New York's fifty-seven per cent. New York with three and a half times as much Winter sunshine as London, or Los Angeles with nearly five times as much as London, may explain why Englishmen treasure every bit of sunshine they can capture while Americans squander their sunlight as they do the rest of their natural resources. They go out less often into the open because they can pick and choose about going out. There will always be plenty of sunshine to walk and play in.

The sunshine differential is one reason why the Pacific coast has forged ahead to a position of athletic leadership in the United States. The tennis champions and the champion boat crews and a good many fine football teams come from California because there one may play and practice twelve months in the year in the open air. To a considerable extent, to

be sure, it is also a case of youthful zest. The older parts of the country are inclined to be a bit sated with athletic prowess, at least in the colleges. The youthful Pacific coast is out for prowess in every field. On the Pacific coast in the last twenty years the growth of institutions of learning has been extraordinary, and part of this is the outdoor Greek theaters and Rose Bowls. How important a factor is the Pacific coast climate in sport we realize when we consider the formidable handicap which Pacific coast athletics must face in the matter of numbers. The players are recruited from a population of ten to fifteen million in the coast and mountain states. This is about one fifth of the population north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi. It is a handicap which on the face of things not even the great advantage of climate, supplemented by the ardor of youth and the regional thirst for prestige, can overcome in the long run. That is one reason why we may expect the Pacific coast to find it harder to maintain its athletic leadership as the years go on. At the very least it is one of the lighter phases of American history that will bear watching.

American superiority in sport, as attested in international contests, and particularly in the quadrennial Olympic Games, has been relatively declining. This has come about as the result, in part, of the great sports boom in other countries which was one of the most striking features of life everywhere after the World War. Progress abroad has been chiefly in the branches which American sport has been inclined to disdain—in gymnastic and mass exercises, in gentler sports like cycling, canoeing, horsemanship, firearms dexterity, fencing, and the water and ice sports. Our strongest bid at the Olympic Games has been in our traditional track and field specialties, the foot races, the jumps and the weight-throwing events, with the newer all-round tests of pentathlon and decathlon. In addition we have made a good showing in the water sports. The foreigners have been advancing out of their traditional specialties to challenge us on our own ground. We have been rudely jostled by the Japanese in swimming and by various national contenders in the weights and the all-round contests. Our hold on the sprints is as firm as ever, and our point score in the 1936 Olympic Games at Berlin, with the redoubtable Negro runner Jesse Owens and his triple crown, was impressive, but the margin of victory is not what it used to be. We won seventy-five per cent of the Olympic field events up to 1916, and only a shade over fifty per cent thereafter.

One reason why American athletic supremacy has to meet a sharper challenge from other nations is to be found in the determined spirit which the other nations are bringing to their games as the result of

profound political, social and psychological changes that have followed upon the World War. We have to deal with the new co-ordinated nationalism which in so many countries has annexed the formerly free activities of the people, and among other things their games and sports. It has long been said and with much truth that Americans play hard just as they work hard. They have been charged with making a business out of play through elaborate organization for victory. A contrast used to be drawn with the exceedingly casual way of British athletics and the emphasis on the fun as well as the winning. Casual would be, in former days, all other foreign competitors against our own high-powered system of athletic campaigning. But whatever may still be the case in England, there has been a radical change in many other countries where play has become a much more serious business than we have ever been tempted to make it. Sport has become part of the national training in the totalitarian countries. Victory in international competitions means much more today than it did a generation ago, before the state had taken complete possession of its people. Men and women athletes in Soviet Russia, in Italy, in Nazi Germany, are now part of the armed forces of their nations, so to speak; and an athlete competing for his country brings a grim do-or-die spirit to the game. Death from overexertion on the Olympic field would no doubt be hailed by the orators at home as death on the battlefield in the service of the fatherland.

Sports have profited by increased leisure. All over the world there came after the World War a sharp decline in working hours. The gains were subsequently lost in the totalitarian countries where the hours are longer than ever. At home we have the forty-hour week in many industries, with a national average for all industries of something like forty-four hours. We have a rapidly growing high-school and college population out of which to coin football and baseball and track teams.

From the sports pages of the newspapers have graduated distinguished practitioners in the general field of journalism and our lighter literature. The newspaper columnist, whose vogue as commentator on public affairs and the passing scene is a revival of the old personal journalism, has often begun as a sports reporter. Ring W. Lardner began as a baseball writer and died an acknowledged master of the American short story. To some extent it is a case of men of talent seeking work in journalism and finding their first opportunity in the sporting pages. Many more gossip writers and philosophers than graduate into other pages of the newspaper remain in the sports section, where the reader's appetite for causerie and speculation is insatiable. In general it may be said of the sporting-news reader that the men who edit the newspapers

for him credit him with agility of mind and an impressive fund of general knowledge.

On the other hand, the follower of the sports pages has his traditions and illusions, too. He likes to see sports held up as a mirror to life in mellifluous verse largely inspired by Rudyard Kipling, chanting the Game, its disappointments and rewards, the plaudits of the crowd and its fickleness, the lessons of courage and steadfastness, sounding in the main the note of the Happy Warrior. Sports cartoonists at their best abandon the narrow chronicle of the day's sporting news and take for their province all human life, subject of course to the popular tone imposed on them by the nature of their surroundings. Like the sports writer who becomes a commentator on all things, the cartoonist may graduate from the sporting pages to a position on the editorial page or in its vicinity. If one wishes one may find in these sporting-page jesters and sages a great tradition which includes a young English newspaper reporter around the year 1835. He was hired to write the burlesque adventures of a group of cockney sportsmen under the title, "Papers of the Pickwick Club."

CHAPTER X

Business

THE SPIRIT of American business is best understood by keeping in mind the fact that this country was settled by companies of Merchant Adventurers. Since that time the merchant has thrived at the expense of the adventurer in the business life of England and of the Old World as a whole. With us business has remained an adventure. With us there persists the basic condition which made trade everywhere an adventure in Elizabethan times. The New World's unlimited possibilities, which inspired the decidedly unconventional activity of a Francis Drake and a John Hawkins, which invited the attention of somewhat more moderate profit-seekers like Walter Raleigh and the colonizing companies under James I, might be found in America as late as the days of Henry Ford.

America was discovered as an incident in the quest for commercial profits and has remained to the present day, or at least until only the other day when the immigration bars were raised, the goal of people all over the earth seeking to better themselves. Let it be noted that in the most staid and settled of Old World countries the element of risk in business has not been eliminated. The employer is an entrepreneur or enterpriser. He is the man who takes a chance. But in this country everybody is the descendant of somebody who took a chance or is himself such a person. From the beginning it was an adventure to uproot oneself in Europe and to brave new climes and new tongues and faces and a new mode of life. From the caravel to the covered wagon runs a tradition of adventure nearly four hundred years old.

If, then, American business methods in the memory of man have always been bolder, more impatient, more rugged than those of Europe,

the reason will be found in the temper and ethics of a new country. A nation making its way in the world is like a man or a corporation in a similar case. Such a nation is apt to push forward in a manner sometimes described as hurried and in questionable taste by older nations of established position. We have heard a good deal in our own day about oncoming nations and satiated nations, about the have-nots and the haves. We have heard the same argument about new social systems in the making. Proletarian sympathizers feel that the costs of civil war and class war are not too big a price to pay for a juster and happier world. Idealists of all shades find it quite in order that nations shall pull in their belts, which means that populations shall starve, while Utopia is being built. Eggs must be broken before omelets can be made, which means the deaths of multitudes of people in civil war, in concentration camps and by the firing squads of the secret police.

American business has had an active part in the preparation of the omelet which we know as America, and the cook has not hesitated to break eggs at a rate which the older chefs of Europe have as a rule considered shockingly wasteful. Our own younger generations today are even more critical of the spendthrift methods of their predecessors and elders in the building of the United States. Where once upon a time people spoke proudly of the conquest of a continent, a very popular phrase in the last ten years has been the plunder of a continent. School-boys were once taught about pioneers who cleared the forests and broke open the prairie for the building of a nation. In a fierce reaction against the Old Order and its vocabulary it now appears that the forests of America were pillaged, the prairies were ravished, and a people was despoiled of its heritage.

No doubt this is in large measure overstatement. Our national susceptibility to current fashion in words will explain the transformation of pioneers into land gamblers, colonizers into profiteers, canal and railroad builders into crooked promoters, and the whole process of nation-building into a sordid money-grabbing enterprise. But when every allowance is made for the exuberance of revolt it is undeniable that the exploitation of the American Continent has been marked by enormous wastes according to Old World standards, though waste is too harsh a word. Given a seemingly inexhaustible storehouse of natural resources, it is idle, and perhaps even childish, to reproach pioneer America for neglecting to emulate the thrift of the land-starved Mediterranean peasant who builds up his fields with basketfuls of soil carried up the mountain terraces on his back, or the shrewd forest conservancy of

European governments acting as trustees of a restricted heritage for a crowded population.

The nature of American business, then, its vision, its methods and morals, have been primarily shaped by the feeling of unlimited opportunity which has permeated the history of this continent from the beginning; to the extent that Opportunity and America have become synonyms. Upon this historic American conception a disillusioned younger generation, under the pressure of economic adversity at home and social developments abroad, now turns its back. The good old times are gone.

The popularity enjoyed in the last decade by the late Professor Turner's fruitful theory of the major role of the frontier in American history must be largely due to the fact that the doctrine of the Frontier lends itself so readily to the dogmas of decline and doom which flourished in the years of depression. The vanishing of the frontier about the year 1890, the end of free land in America, might well impress itself on the national consciousness in the best of times. It would be the close of an era which dated from America's beginnings. America's exhausted free land received special emphasis in the depression years because it fell in with the end of other epochs and eras. Under the spell of Soviet Russia many had learned to speak of the doom of capitalism. From the Fascist upsurge on the Continent many were driven to argue the doom of democracy. The free land cycle, the free economic cycle, and the cycle of free government would thus have run fairly parallel courses. In our own American terminology it could be summed up as the end of Opportunity.

The ideologies of the moment reduced it to a single lost opportunity—our vanished free land. Only upon the small free farmer, Thomas Jefferson's ideal citizen, could a democracy be enduringly based. As our people drifted more and more to the towns and learned to depend for their livelihood on a machinery of production not in their own control, real liberty came to an end. In the phrase of the time, political liberty was impossible without economic liberty. The collectivism of modern production made inevitable the collective state, with unavoidable incursions on what used to be called individual liberty. The old opportunities, to work as one pleased on one's own farm or in one's own small shop, to buy and sell as one pleased, and to think and vote as one pleased, were simultaneously compromised.

We have said that many people were won over to this dogma of a constricted American horizon. They would be many in absolute num-

bers but relatively few in the whole nation. The theory of closed epochs cast its spell over doctrinaires. It entered little into the thinking of the American people as late as the Presidential election of 1936 with its stunning Democratic majorities. The electoral map of the United States after that Roosevelt tidal wave might well be the chart of a new political era. Some of the inferences drawn from the popular mandate of 1936 by President Roosevelt and his opponents might seem to prepare the way for new eras reflecting fundamental changes in the national temper. But the proof that no such change had taken place was at hand in March 1937, when Mr Roosevelt found it necessary to issue a warning against runaway commodity prices and the danger of a new boom. It was the belief of most competent judges that such a danger did exist in the Spring of 1937. Whether or not the fear was justified, whether President Roosevelt acted wisely or not in slamming down the brakes, the significant thing is that Mr Roosevelt and his advisers believed that the danger existed. But this is another way of saying that the American people in the eighth year of the depression and in the fourth year of the New Deal had to be safeguarded against the lure of a new bull market. Adventure was still in the nation's bones, and Opportunity was not considered dead.

2

The level of business morality has been rising in the last half century. Practices that entered into the creation of the early trusts and the building of the transcontinental railroads, or sinister partnerships like those between franchise-seekers and corrupt legislators, are no longer possible. The rising ethical standard is reflected in pure-food laws and laws to promote honesty in advertising. This improvement may be asserted in the face of grim episodes like the oil scandals in the Harding administration or the whole record of our second Gilded Age which ended with the crash of 1929.

We do not face a sharply defined moral issue in the story of our pre-1929 stock flotations, our so-called guaranteed real-estate mortgages, our mushroom public-utility empires, our reckless banking procedures in high places. The country after 1929 was in the mood to use bitter words like piracy and plunder to describe operations for which in the sunlit days it had quite another name. The vices of the holding company in industry and finance are now a commonplace, but up to the great collapse the holding company in the eyes of many honest men was only America following its star. There is little to be said for the technical ingenuities by which the huge holding-company pyramids were built

up. For the gigantic technique in itself there is this to be said, that it was characteristically American.

The word promoter has two obvious meanings; but in the unhappy mood of the American people after 1929 the two meanings blended into one, the lower meaning. The promoter may be a peddler of worthless stocks and real estate; he is a large-scale swindler. But the promoter may have something of real value to sell; which value he humanly is bound to exaggerate, not infrequently deceiving himself as well as his customers. In any creative enterprise who shall say where enthusiasm stops and delusion begins, where business risk stops and misrepresentation begins? America from the very beginning has known both types of promoter—the adventurer in our modern sense, that is to say, the swindler, and the Merchant Adventurer, the speculator, the entrepreneur. Two years before the founding of Virginia in 1607 George Chapman and Ben Jonson in their play *Eastward Hoe* have Master Seagull describe the riches of the new country:

Gold is more plentiful than copper is with us. Why, man, all their dripping pans and chamber pots are pure gold, and all the chains with which they chain up their streets are massie gold; and as for rubies and diamonds they go forth on holy days and gather them by the seashore to hang on their children's coats.

That tradition of gold to be picked up in the streets of America was alive, half figuratively, half believed, in European peasant villages as late as twenty-five years ago; and it lingers perhaps even now. More than a hundred years after Virginia the famous George Law won subscriptions for his Mississippi Scheme with prospectuses of a Louisiana rich in inexhaustible mines of gold and silver which it would not be necessary to work by the usual method: the whole surface of the country was strewn with lumps of gold, and the waters of the Mississippi were thick with gold, needing only to be filtered. The newly chartered Virginia Company in 1609 immediately set to work to raise money and attract settlers by issuing prospectuses full of all kinds of falsehoods. Yet there were real values in Virginia. Investors and colonists might be drawn by the dazzling vision of gold mines, but there was an agricultural wealth which soon proved substantial, though never probably coming up to fond expectations.

There is much more of American history in the real-estate Eden of *Martin Chuzzlewit* than has usually been read into that famous satire on American business methods. It is wholly in the tradition of the real-estate promoter at his worst that the new and flourishing city of

Eden, as it appeared on the plans from which Martin Chuzzlewit made his purchase, with its banks, churches, market places, factories, hotels, mansions and wharves, should have turned out to be a malarial swamp. Subdivision promoters in our own day have been known to sell choice building lots under water. No doubt malaria and yellow fever took a heavy toll of the early settlers in Cairo, Illinois, which was the original of Martin Chuzzlewit's Eden. And there were no doubt many tragic originals for the Irish immigrant family whom Martin helped escape from the Eden jungle, leaving their dead behind them. A multitude of Edens has gone into the peopling of the United States. The decisive fact is, nevertheless, that the Eden of General Cyrus Choke and Major Hannibal Chollop did become with the years a real Eden, within our human limitations, for a vast number of settlers from our Eastern seaboard and from Europe. Statistically, the hapless Irish immigrant family in *Martin Chuzzlewit* demands to be set up against hundreds of thousands of Irish immigrants who did find in this country a home and a livelihood during this very period of Martin Chuzzlewit's visit to Eden in the 1840s. A devastating Irish famine drove 1,500,000 men, women and children from that distressful island in the course of ten years, and more than half of them came to this country. Between 1840 and 1850 nearly eight hundred thousand Irish immigrants entered the United States, and in the following decade came nine hundred thousand more. With them came nearly a million Germans. Of the newcomers, a great many went to make their homes and prosper in a thousand Edens of the Mississippi Valley. The population of Illinois in 1840 was less than half a million and in 1860 it was nearly one and three quarter millions. When Charles Dickens first visited us in 1842 the population of the Mississippi Valley was perhaps seven million and the population of Ireland was more than eight million. When he came here the second time, in 1867, the Mississippi Valley had twenty million people and Ireland had five and a half million people. Ireland in the space of the three decades between 1840 and 1870 poured into this country more than two million immigrants who, with their descendants, helped reclaim the swamplands of Eden, and by building first the roads, then the canals, and then the railways, built up the Inland Empire.

We live in a time, as we have already said, which declines to speak of the building up of Inland Empires and prefers to speak of continents ravished and national resources pillaged. It is a state of mind which accepts Martin Chuzzlewit's unhappy Irish immigrant family as typical of American real-estate methods, but which is apt to overlook the immense work of Irish relief, as we should call it now, carried out by the

American real-estate promoter, steamship agent and cheap-labor recruiter who helped to bring more than two million Irishmen from destitution, and often from starvation, to a life of toil and exploitation no doubt in this country, but after all, a living and a future. A high death rate marked the early Edens of the United States, whether in the Mississippi Valley bottoms of the 1840s or New York immigrant "lung-blocks" of the 1880s, but this must be set beside the famine death rates from which the immigrant fled; and, second, it must be related to the pioneering tradition of America from the beginning. This continent has always exacted from its colonizers a high initiation fee. In the twenty years between 1606 and 1625 English ships brought more than fifty-six hundred settlers to Virginia, of whom in the latter year some eleven hundred were living in the colony. In the twelve-month period 1619-20 there sailed for Virginia twelve hundred immigrants, of whom one thousand died on the voyage or died in the colony within the year. When the Mayflower cast anchor off Cape Cod in December 1620, there were eighteen married women on board. The following Summer at Plymouth only four of them were alive.

The pioneer is prodigal of natural wealth, of human life, of human happiness. To call it waste, from the snug security of our latter-day dividends on the pioneer's labor, is something less than fair.

3

The scope and pace of American business are primarily conditioned by the continental setting. Size is basic. We say colloquially that the sky is the limit, but we began by saying that the oceans are the limit. National destiny carried Americans from the Alleghenies to the Pacific in two generations. We conquered a continent by leaps and bounds and we develop chain stores by leaps and bounds. The first Merchant Adventurers thought in terms of land charters running all the way from the Atlantic to the South Sea, wherever that might be, and the theme of endless space still dominates our business thinking. We expand indefinitely. In October 1936 a citizen's committee in charge of the centennial celebration of Madison Avenue in New York City bestowed first prize for the best-decorated shopwindows on the avenue to Miss Jane Engel, a new name in New York mercantile life. Her dressmaking shop made the bravest showing against the competition of distinguished and historic business firms on Madison Avenue. Who was Jane Engel? The brief newspaper accounts of the time said that she was graduated from Goucher College in Baltimore, came to New York City in 1930, opened

a dress shop, and half a dozen years later controlled thirty shops in as many cities.

The characteristic American trait in this record is not the swift rise of a young businesswoman to affluence, but the thirty shops; and even more the thirty shops in as many different cities. The spirit of the covered wagon is in the American businessman or businesswoman of today. We reach out instinctively for the horizon and beyond. It is quite possible that Paris may boast a successful career in the dressmaking field as impressive as Miss Engel's, or more so. Perhaps the great establishments of the *haute couture*, a Poiret in his time, then a Lanvin, a Cheruit, a Schiaparelli, have employed more workers and done more business than our own successful young woman merchant. But in Paris a rapidly growing business will grow in Paris, piling up floor space, pay roll, profits. In this country we expand into other neighborhoods and then into other cities. We think in combinations, mergers, chains. The spirit and the tradition and the background all encourage it. We have a big open country, as open to chain shoe stores as it was originally to trappers in their canoes and farmers with their plows. We have a uniform culture largely created by a uniform continent, so that there is no such difference between life in New York and life in Cincinnati or Akron as there is between Paris and Marseilles or Dijon. The frocks of which New York approves are not too good for the provinces, because at bottom New York, too, is provincial. This uniformity of the people which so profoundly and justly impressed James Bryce fifty years ago makes America the ideal home for mass production. Our one hundred and thirty million people are sure to like the same thing at the same time, whether it is afternoon frocks, streamline automobiles, or best-seller novels.

This vast American market place is tridimensional. American business is large-scale business not only because it operates in a continental market but because in addition it ministers to a people living under a high ceiling—or, in their thoughts, under no ceiling at all other than the blue vault of their own cheerful confidence. It is the American standard of living, which is so much higher than that of the other nations and which is always climbing more rapidly from its own high level. By comparison with the American market all other markets are static. Because no standard of living is too good for anybody, because the automobile is a necessity for all but the poorest one tenth of the population, because tenement houses in the year 1936 in New York were being re-equipped with electric refrigeration, American business lives in the expanding universe which the new physics has popularized.

4

The United States may easily dispute with Great Britain the title of a nation of shopkeepers. Of our gainfully employed population a larger part is engaged in trade, transportation and the clerical occupations. Great Britain in 1921 had in these occupations twenty-four out of every one hundred persons gainfully employed. In 1930 we had twenty-eight in every one hundred. To be sure, when we speak of business and businessmen in the United States it is the industrialist rather than the trader that we have in mind, the steel king or coal king or oil king rather than the merchant prince. But the very fact that we do not sharply distinguish between the manufacturing interest and the commercial interest would hint at the truth that with us the manufacturer and the merchant are more closely blended than in England. In the oil industry and the automobile industry, where we must still look for our two largest individual American fortunes, Rockefeller and Ford, the producer and distributor are one. Indeed the Rockefeller business has been primarily a distributing business ever since John D. Rockefeller concentrated on pipe-line control as the key to control over the whole industry. The retail automobile dealer is only the selling agent of the automobile producer. The retail dealer may be virtually financed by his manufacturer who will also do the advertising for him. The dealer is an "outlet." An increasingly popular feature in the field of national advertising, that is, country-wide advertising, is the display of an article for sale accompanied by long lists of local dealers throughout the United States. Automobiles, gasoline, house fuel, foods, radio and proprietary medicines fall into this class.

In the great industrial plants the most important member of the staff is the sales manager. In the popular fiction magazines the young hero makes good in business much less often by victories of production than of salesmanship. The triumphs are not won in the factory but in the market. For a nation of unrivaled inventors, as we like to consider ourselves, it seems odd that the young success heroes should come home rejoicing to their loyal young wives, not with a new alloy or a new peace agreement with the working force, but with a big sales order. Perhaps it is an unspoken tribute to our native skill that we take production and invention for granted. As they say of the art of playwriting, that anyone can write a play but only a genius can sell one, so it is an unspoken premise, an unconscious premise in the American mind, that our genius

is equal to turning out any machine or any product, if only we can find the market for it.

It is all the easier to think of the American manufacturer as essentially a merchant, a salesman, when we turn to the American farmer and find in him, too, so much of the trader and the speculator. In the overwrought vocabulary of recent years of disillusion American history has been often described as in essence a land gamble. People here have bought land, not to root themselves in the soil and build homes for one-self and one's children, but to make a quick profit and sell out and move on. This is an exaggerated statement of the case, as so many statements are exaggerated in our economic and social reappraisals of the last twenty years. The mobility of the American farmer, as compared with the tillers of the soil everywhere else on earth, is to be explained by the very opposite of the commercial, profit-seeking motive. It has been rather the restlessness of a pioneer people in a vast open continent beckoning to adventure.

But if the force that drove the wave of occupation forward at such speed was primarily a lust for adventure, a restlessness that is still alive in thirty million automobiles and trailers, it must be admitted that the profit motive was not lacking. Sturdy young farmers' sons were always moving West to carve out farms for themselves, and one reason was that a man could sell advantageously his farm in Ohio and Illinois to buy himself a much bigger farm beyond the Mississippi. As late as the opening decade of the present century Iowa farmers sold out at good prices to go and live on much broader acres in the virgin fields of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Profit-seeking of a more obvious kind was the invasion twenty years ago of what is now called the Dust Bowl. War prices brought forty million acres of the High Plains under cultivation. With peace farm prices crashed. It was not the traditional farm crisis of history with crop failure in dry seasons and glut in other years. Our farm crisis in the 1920s was a business crisis. Deflated farm prices had to bear up a structure of farm debt built upon boom prices. When wheat was selling at two dollars and twenty cents a bushel people bought land at five hundred dollars an acre. They bought under the delusion that the World War would always go on.

Throughout history people have spoken of peasant caution, along with peasant thrift and peasant greed. We cannot dream of applying the historic peasant caution to the American farmer; he has too much of the businessman and promoter and adventurer—though not as much as the hostile formula would have it when it sums up our whole farm history as one protracted land gamble.

We have to do, then, with an America whose origins are rooted in Business. The continent was discovered by navigators on the lookout for shorter and securer trade routes to the Far East. The discovery of the New World came less than a generation before the great European upheaval that goes by the name of the Protestant Reformation. Not a few modern scholars and many special pleaders have shown an exaggerated tendency to describe the Reformation as primarily an economic revolution, marking the emergence of our present capitalist system. The connection between capitalism and Protestantism has been overstressed. It has not been made clear why the Reformation failed to take root in old trading centers like Venice and Genoa, or why, in German lands, Catholicism should have survived the assault in south Germany with its great trading cities. But in the main it is undeniable that the advent of the Reformation coincided in time with the swift advance of the bourgeois civilization, the Business civilization, that was to triumph over the old feudal order.

We may go further and argue that the connection between the discovery of America and the rise of a business civilization in Europe is not accidental. America itself supplied a powerful impetus to the process of economic change. One specific cause was the influx into Europe of gold from Mexico and Peru. This began less than half a century after 1492, and precipitated a revolution in the European price level. Between 1500 and 1600 the stock of gold and silver in Western Europe increased threefold. This, says Professor Channing, not only tells the story of misery and death for the native races of America, but also spelled "the dislocation of the social organization of European countries, notably of England, from which flowed in turn the first great wave of English colonial and commercial expansion." The conditions which America helped to create reacted in turn upon her. The new merchant classes sought outlets in America for their enterprises. The younger sons of an impoverished aristocracy sought in the new countries an outlet for their energies and a field for carving out a fortune. Americans today come rightfully by their distrust of corporations and monopolies; for the United States was settled by corporations exercising monopoly power in varying degree—the Virginia Company, the Massachusetts Bay Company.

5

The same ultimate cause will account for the predatory element in American business and for the predatory nature of our lower forms of political life; it is the height of the American "ceiling," our wealth and

abundance. The size of business profits makes it cheaper to pay blackmail than to fight the underworld of the protectors and grafters. Long before the World War we were ruefully comparing the standards of European city government with our own. In our self-reproach we failed to note what might be called the bookkeeping factor. The small tradesman in Berlin or Paris who will not pay tribute to the neighborhood policeman for winking at the violation of a municipal ordinance refrains, no doubt, for a number of reasons—tradition among others; but the basic reason must be that the profits of the Paris or London tradesman will not permit the luxury of blackmail. The New York grocer submits to extortion because his profits are so much larger. He can afford to pay a reasonable percentage. With us time is money; it is cheaper to slip the blackmailing policeman a five-dollar bill than to spend hours in court answering petty charges, let alone the trouble of prosecuting the blackmailer before his superiors. American business permits an overhead which the smaller returns of European business will not allow. European cities have more honest government because over there they simply cannot afford the other kind. America, living in an expanding economy, as we have called it, can afford the waste of misgovernment—or could once afford it, in the opinion of observers who have announced the end of American expansion and the advent of a static economy. The wastes of municipal misgovernment and of political corruption are thus an extreme form of the wastes of democracy in general, as stressed by its opponents. Even before the World War it was a commonplace on the Continent that democracy is a luxury which only the rich and well-stuffed nations can afford. The thesis was restated by Adolf Hitler when he declared that if Germany had the rich fields of the Ukraine or the mineral wealth of the Urals the German people, too, might treat itself to the pleasure of palaver and turmoil that go by the name of democracy.

There is another reason why American business practices might be expected to go beyond the normal play of the profit instinct in the European businessman. Specifically we may attempt a comparison between America and Great Britain, and we shall get soonest at our answer by comparing the politics of the two countries rather than their trade customs. Why is there much less corruption in British politics than in our own? Why are British municipalities a model of business management, while city government in the United States has been our outstanding failure and disgrace? Why do a good many Americans sigh when they think of the traditions of the British Civil Service, hardly daring to hope that we in the United States can ever reach that high level of honesty and efficiency, hoping only that we may make a fair approach to the British

model? The answer is that political life in England offers its own material rewards of a type not known among us. These profits are the perquisites of caste, and they do not exist over here because we have no caste in this country. We need only recall that it is less than a generation since members of the House of Commons have been paid for their services. This innovation was forced by the rise of the Labor party and the arrival of many M.P.s who had to work for a living. Before that it was assumed that England was quite properly ruled by men whose stake in the country was considerable enough to make a parliamentary salary a matter of indifference.

It is easily conceivable that an unpaid House of Commons drawn wholly from the propertied classes might indirectly, by its acts and policies, offer its members more than the equivalent of an American congressman's salary, or the pay, today, of a Labor M.P. The English cities were more honestly governed than our own because municipal affairs were chiefly in the hands of men of property. A substantial English citizen on the municipal council would plainly be much harder to buy than an American alderman. The Englishman, in selling out his town, would be injuring his own interests as a large taxpayer. The traditional American boodle alderman had no property interests to hurt.

We have a similar situation when we consider the lower judiciary in the two countries. We have the traditional American local magistrate who is apt to be a not too successful lawyer with a gift for politics rather than law; and we have the English county magistrate who is also the big local landowner. The English magistrate is free from the material temptations to which his American colleague may be exposed; but he also has rewards, imponderable or substantial, in the way of status, and even profit, if we assume that no man can altogether emancipate himself from the subtle influences of class. Once upon a time in England the wages of agricultural laborers were fixed by boards of magistrates who were themselves the landowners.

Roughly, then, too roughly perhaps, one might say that England's ruling classes have governed honestly because they have had a monopoly of governing. This was an emolument in itself. The British Civil Service no doubt deserves its fame, but the Civil Service has been a preserve for the middle and upper classes. It has carried status, security and very good pay. The salaries of English judges in King's Bench, Chancery and Probate, of whom there are approximately twenty-five, is twenty-five thousand dollars a year as against twenty thousand dollars a year for associate justices of the United States Supreme Court, of whom there are eight. The salary of the Lord Chancellor is fifty thousand dollars, and

that of the Chief Justice of England forty thousand dollars, as against twenty thousand five hundred dollars for the Chief Justice of the United States. In a country where the cost of living is so much lower than our own, where industrial wages are about one half of our own average wages, the generous scale of English governmental salaries is even more impressive than the comparative figures would suggest. It is hardly necessary to speak of the Indian Civil Service and its dazzling salaries.

To put it very crudely, American businessmen in our Gilded Age have bought up legislatures and city councils to obtain franchises and privileges which in older countries would be distributed, one might say, automatically under the pressure of vested class interests. To be sure, with us the initiative has frequently come not from corrupt businessmen but from corrupt politicians. Money paid out to legislative bodies has often been blackmail rather than bribery. It has been ransom for holdup bills or "strike" bills; as in Oriental courts of justice the litigant with a perfectly just cause must nevertheless be prepared to pay for what is only his due. But when we say corrupt politics we come back to our reason why English politics are cleaner than American politics. Over there the businessmen are themselves the politicians in Parliament or in local government.

That is why Charles A. and Mary Beard, in their *Rise of American Civilization*, draw up a bitter indictment of American business enterprise after the Civil War, but often present a plea in mitigation. They remind the reader that it is a very old story in the history of business and of politics. Trade and industry played a powerful role in ancient Athens. "Relations between the statesmen and capitalists of Rome seem to have been more than intimate." Old aristocrats invested in new business enterprises. As members of the august Roman Senate they awarded contracts to companies in which they held stock. They speculated in war contracts, with themselves as makers of war and peace. Because businessmen in America have not directly had the making of war and peace, they have collaborated with the politicians who do. It all comes down to the proposition that if we average up the direct and indirect rewards of public life in America and in England, the unselfish character of the English politician and the higher ethics of the English businessman do not stand out in quite the traditional sheer contrast to our own.

The lines we have quoted from the *Rise of American Civilization* on the close relations that have always existed between businessmen and

politicians, occur in the chapter, "The Triumph of Business Enterprise," in that distinguished work. This chapter we now propose to examine in some detail, in our effort to arrive at a just appraisal of the spirit and methods of American business. The story of the years between the Civil War and the beginning of the present century, as the Beards have written it, may almost be called the model for many later books on the same subject by much less competent hands; so that the tale has progressively been cheapened and coarsened, the manner has grown more violent. The task is worth while because we are dealing with a conception of American business that has been popularized in the last decade both in Government circles and in the colleges. A study of American business in an era that ended forty years ago has very actual value today.

We may begin with a general statement. If the story of the Gilded Age as usually told is the whole story of American business between 1865 and 1900 then the history of the American people in that period and since then becomes impossible to understand. The familiar ugly facts of the Age of the Dinosaurs are not here brought into question—the early record of Standard Oil, the Gould-Fisk code of railroad ethics, the Western railroads with their Credit Mobiliers and their land empires by congressional grant, the later story of corporate greed. But it is obvious that if monumental rapacities and corruption, plunder and chicane, were the whole of American business or even the chief trait of American business, the consequences must have been national spoliation and ruin. At the turn of the century we should have found economic and social conditions in the United States far different from what we know they actually were.

To be sure, there is an answer. The country's natural riches and the bursting energies of its people more than atoned for the nefarious activities of its millionaires. The robber barons of medieval Europe could not stop the forward march of the new business civilization. The energies of a new age in Europe paid toll to the feudal highwaymen and prospered nevertheless. The living forces of America after the Civil War had their way against our own robber barons.

But to admit this much is to admit the futility of writing the history of American business enterprise in terms of the robber baron. No serious historian of the economic development of modern Europe or the rise of modern civilization would dedicate himself to the original robber baron as the main figure in the picture. Outside of history books for children we do not often meet him. The serious historian of modern beginnings in Europe is concerned with the decay of feudalism and the

rise of free communes, with towns and trade, with guilds and crafts, with the Genoese and Venetian traders, and later the Spanish and the English, with Fuggers and the Hanseatic towns in Germany, with the Flemings in England and the Spanish Jews in Holland, with inventions, notably gunpowder and the printing press, with land enclosures which created rural proletariats and so provided in advance a labor supply for the Industrial Revolution. Such things are the substance of a history of European business.

This commonplace truth needs only to be set down to demonstrate the basic error of describing American business in terms of the robber baron, individual or corporate. It is not telling the real story to concentrate on the questionable methods that entered into the creation of many American millionaires. This has been the favorite subject and method of an army of books ever since Ida Tarbell at the beginning of the century wrote the history of the Standard Oil Company and Gustavus Myers wrote his *History of Great American Fortunes*. But it is to be noted in the case of both writers that they dealt with a specific or a limited field; they did not write a history of all American business, with the implication that the nation as a whole conducted its production and distribution of wealth in the spirit of Jay Gould and Jim Fisk.

The story of American business enterprise, even in a Gilded Age, is best told by the statisticians of the Census Bureau and the sociologists of the year 1900 whom the Beards cite towards the end of their long chapter on the Business in the Gilded Age. Something like forty brilliantly written pages have been devoted to a grim picture of greed and outlawry in the years between the end of the Civil War and the end of the century. Quite a different picture flashes on the screen in the last four or five pages.

Census Bureau statisticians and outside sociologists in 1900 [say our authors], unfolded a story that made the political rhetoric handed down from the days of the Fathers seem strangely formal and antiquated.

There follows a summary of astounding national growth and material well-being. Between 1860 and 1900 our population grew from thirty-one million to seventy-six million, a growth "unprecedented in Western history." Our national wealth, say the Beards, was only one third that of Great Britain in the year of Daniel Webster's death. Half a century later our wealth was one and a quarter times that of Great Britain. In half a century it had grown fivefold.

Even here, to be sure, our authors are at pains to caution us. This

glowing tale, say the Beards, was not the whole story about America. The statisticians and sociologists had failed to take note of the fact that at one end of the social scale we had men whose wealth was beyond the dreams of Croesus. At the other end "was poverty widespreaing and degrading enough to arouse fear among those who scanned the horizon of the long future." There is implied here a saving distinction between "poverty widespreaing enough" and "widespread poverty" which need not detain us; all the more, because immediately following this reminder about super-Croesuses and paupers on the American scene we are told:

Between these extremes was a middle class of prosperous farmers, professional workers, and small merchants in larger proportion and enjoying a higher degree of material comfort than in any other country on the globe.

Here, in a single sentence, our authors go very far towards undermining the main thesis of their whole chapter on American business enterprise in the generation after the Civil War. If American economic life after the Civil War was a jungle roamed by the timber wolves of Big Business, and if the story of our economic life in that period was primarily the story of trusts and monopolies, not to say the story of Jay Gould and Jim Fisk, how could this proportionately large class of small business people have arisen and prospered? It is this "small merchant" that we must keep in mind as a corrective to the usual picture of our country in the Gilded Age. We must think of millions of small businessmen going about their affairs with average human honesty and decency while the super-bravos of Big Business fought their billion-dollar battles for control. It is a caution recognized by our authors, though in somewhat offhand fashion, when they describe the great outburst of business activity after the Civil War. "But above the multitude who worked in the sphere of business towered a few figures as imposing in their day as the barons of Magna Carta, rulers of England in the days of King John." The trouble is that our authors' main concern throughout is with the few towering figures in American economic life. Except for occasional afterthoughts, very few of us would be encouraged to think that a "multitude" of Americans worked in the sphere of business.

To be sure, it might be a multitude of small businessmen and yet be under the thumb of the business barons. This question of "control" of the nation's business life demands a closer analysis. To say that John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie and the elder J. Pierpont Morgan towered as big as the English barons may be correct enough. To say that

they "ruled" as King John's barons did is a palpable exaggeration. These financial giants of ours did not even begin to rule the world of American business with the absolutism or completeness of the old feudal barons.

By the test of actual ownership of wealth there can be but one answer. We may take the whole list of the Beards' industrial "peerage"—Jay Gould, William H. Vanderbilt, Collis P. Huntington, J. J. Hill, E. H. Harriman, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie, Jay Cooke, J. P. Morgan, William A. Clark, Philip D. Armour. The sum total of their personal fortunes may have been a billion and a half or two billion dollars. This would be between one and two per cent of the national wealth of the country in 1900; and King John's barons must have owned a much larger share of England in their time. If we are speaking for the moment of actual wealth, as distinguished from power and control, then we have these dozen giants of American acquisitive genius amassing for themselves two billion dollars out of an increase of more than seventy billion dollars in national wealth between the Civil War and 1900, or say three per cent. This may be a huge and unjust tribute to pay a dozen men, but that is not the question with which we are at the moment concerned. The point rather is that in this same year 1900 there were more than a million retail merchants whose savings and stock in trade at an estimated moderate average of five thousand dollars would amount to several times the joint fortune of our dozen titans. In the year 1914 one sixth of all our manufacturing establishments, to the number of thirty thousand, were in the class having an annual value of output between one hundred thousand dollars and five hundred thousand dollars. This falls fairly short of Big Business; but the aggregate value of products for these thirty thousand medium-sized industrial establishments was nearly nine billion dollars. Assume a modest ten per cent annual profit on this turnover and we have something under a billion dollars. Capitalize this profit at a modest rate and we have a body of thirty thousand small manufacturers who were "worth" five times our dozen titans of Big Industry. Small merchant and small industrialist together might be worth as much as ten times the wealth of the titans.

It is not an argument we would press too far. In practice the debate over the distribution of American wealth very soon shifts over to the control of the nation's wealth, and quite properly. The thing that counts is not what part of America is owned by Mr Rockefeller or Mr Morgan, but how much of the country, of other people's wealth, these gentlemen control. That is the problem of our huge financial pyramids

today, and it was already acute at the beginning of the century in the Beards' narrative:

The land of Washington, Franklin, Jefferson and John Adams had become a land of millionaires and the supreme direction of its economy had passed from the owners of farms and isolated plants and banks to a few men and institutions near the center of its life.

This raises the whole problem of centralization and control in the national life. Not at all in frivolous mood we may ask how far does control really control, and how far is it controlled? To what extent is a centralized economic system operated by spontaneous impulses at the center, and to what extent does the central office issue its ukases in response to action at the periphery? How far does a House of Morgan dominate America, and how far do the Morgans take orders from America?

In setting out to answer our own questions we may take as a starting point and as a text another statement from the Beard chapter. Here is a country divided up into great business empires, but the imperial sway does not bear down too hard.

Within this "new Roman Empire" of business [say our authors] new industries were continually springing up with the progress of invention. Minor princelings and earls, as long as they restrained their pretensions, enjoyed a high degree of local autonomy.

New enterprises of any moment, however, found it hard if not impossible to make their way "without paying tribute to the grand seigneurs."

But when we say control and really mean tribute we do not quite grasp the true nature of the process. Tribute is not synonymous with dictation or control, and in a very real sense is opposed to the idea of dictation or control. Tribute is a fee or percentage paid, in good circumstances for services rendered, in the worst cases for the privilege of being let alone. Business initiative remains with the tributary. We find that the Morgans are represented on the directorate of banks with, let us say, half the bank deposits in the country, and we immediately assume that the Morgans control half of the business of the country by dictating to businessmen how to run their enterprises; but most often the supposedly omnipotent Morgans are there to approve and go along. Our authors recognize that the regional princelings and earls of the Gilded Age were allowed a high degree of local autonomy if they restrained their pretensions. But, obviously, if the local magnates ranged

too far they would cease to be princelings and become rivals for empire, in which case we should naturally expect war. Otherwise, when business enjoys local autonomy it means freedom from control by the Morgans.

Centralized control in business is much in the same case as newspaper control over public opinion. Newspaper owners and writers do not dominate their readers but are dominated by them. The press helps to shape public opinion, not by imposing its own ideas but by going along with it and making its humble contribution. This in essence is the control exercised by the House of Morgan over the banking resources of America, and through such banking resources, over the economic enterprise of America. It is the loose, sprawling supervision which is content to pocket its provincial tribute, leaving the tributary to go very much his own way. At most, the show of authority would take a negative form. It might veto a course of action. It did not often impose a course of action.

Certainly we cannot call up a picture of the Morgans issuing to their thousands of subordinate banks a specified list of instructions, describing the merchants and manufacturers who should receive loans and those who should be discouraged. We find it hard to call up a picture of young businessmen in the Middle West prevented by Morgan "control" from building up a Buick Company or a Chevrolet Company or a Fisher Body Company, all of which later would pass under the control of the Morgans as the General Motors Company. Two brothers named Von Sweringen, originally in the real-estate business in Cleveland, completed in 1929 the building of a new railroad "empire," and did so with Morgan assistance which came to them when they were within apparent striking distance of their goal. As new men rose to prominence in America's economic life, it was the Morgan policy to secure the use of their talents or influence. The fact that these men won their spurs elsewhere, that they forced recognition from the Morgans, so to speak, plainly shows that opportunity was still operating in the country at large despite Wall Street control.

The common life of America has functioned without benefit of Morgan. The history of a period written in terms of J. D. Rockefeller and J. P. Morgan, let alone Jay Gould and Jim Fisk, is misplaced emphasis carried to the point of distortion. Quite rightly the Beards say that any attempt to draw the American scene between 1865 and the end of the century "without these dominating figures looming in the foreground is to make a shadow picture"; but it is another matter to make these foreground figures very nearly the whole picture. Big

Business in our own day is obviously bigger than in the early stages of integration and centralization in the period after the Civil War; yet in November 1938, Professor Sumner H. Slichter of the Harvard Business School could write in the *Atlantic Monthly*:

Most of us get our impressions of profits from the reports of several hundred large corporations which issue published statements. There are, however, 400,000 active corporations in the country and the bulk of business is still done by small concerns which issue no public reports. Until one knows how the 400,000 are faring, one does not know the real condition of American industry.

Can we say, then, that it is really telling the story of American business in the 1880s if we make Mr Rockefeller and the railroad promoters the whole of the story? The dominating figures change without warning into dominant figures, and the dominant figures into conquerors and masters.

For that matter, even within the framework of Big Business to which the Beards have chosen to confine the picture of American business, the method of treatment is one of arbitrary emphasis. Thus we find our authors in one place handsomely crediting the oil business as typified in John D. Rockefeller with bringing "science, acumen and imagination to the creation of material goods and organizing human services to supply the world with useful commodities of a high standard." What more can one say in behalf of a business enterprise? In the face of such a record other considerations ought to be subsidiary. The acquisitive spirit behind the story of Standard Oil and its kind, the savage battles for control, the combinations and mergers, the vast personal fortunes—they are indeed part of the story, but essentially they are a very minor part in the study of the economic life of a period and a nation. Yet the stress is usually so placed that the wickedness of the Rockefeller record is very nearly everything, and the creation of material goods for the whole world becomes incidental. The evil wrought by the titans of the Gilded Age is spread all over the narrative. The good is oft interred in parentheses and afterthoughts.

Often we must look to these side remarks for the heart of the matter. For instance, these giant combinations in industry, railroads and finance, we are told, had their real origin in something more than personal greed and a lust for power.

Besides the lure of profits [say the Beards] the casualties of competition were driving railway promoters to seek closer affiliations; rate cutting, rebating and promoters' wars, coupled with periodical panics, had

brought financial difficulties even to the strongest lines. Only one American railway listed on the London Stock Exchange was paying dividends in 1889, and in less than fifteen years more than 400 companies had gone into bankruptcy representing two and a half billion in capital.

Plainly, then, these great business combinations and consolidations were not an alien and ruinous invention foisted upon a national economy for personal profit. On the contrary, we are told that the trusts and consolidations came into being as a defense against chaos, and our Rockefellers and Morgans, instead of being portrayed as feudal lords and robber barons, should be pictured as surgeons in a drastic but life-saving operation. They should be pictured as the Louis XIs of France and the Henry VIIIs of England, whom a national need brought forth to deal with the chaos of their own feudal barons. The methods of these early European consolidators were far from pretty, yet history has agreed to see in Louis and Henry and Ivan of Russia something more than creatures of low cunning and unmeasured cruelty. Professor Beard says, "It was such calamities no less than colossal ambitions that moved the empire builders."

Chaos in American business of the Gilded Age is in itself no cause for deep condemnation. Business always and everywhere moves in cycles; and for that matter, even Nature is not immune to periods of drought and rain, of glut and famine. With us the process of growth by boom and collapse has been more violent because of the pace of conquest. As we have said in an earlier chapter, Daniel Boone led the vanguard of colonization through the gateway of the Alleghenies in 1775. Daniel Boone died in Missouri in 1820, the year in which that commonwealth was admitted into the Union. Twenty-five years after the death of Boone the Americans were on the Pacific in California and Oregon; it was only twenty years after the death of Thomas Jefferson, only ten years after the death of James Madison. New York in the valley of the Mohawk was still semi-frontier country around 1850, when a lad named Grover Cleveland was growing up there, but California was already in the Union. When conquest goes forward by such prodigious strides it is inevitable that dislocations and collapses shall come. Gigantic business operations were dictated by the fact that gigantic distances were covered, by the fact that everything in American life went by giant leaps and bounds. So it was with railway building after the Civil War. "Sustained by lavish financial backing," say our authors, "construction and consolidation swept on at a magic pace up and down the Continent." But in spite of such mergers and unions, "the evils of disjointed and conflicting lines inadequate to the requirements of national transporta-

tion remained painfully manifest." Indeed, as late as 1920 Congress sought to promote railway consolidations.

What we must picture, then, after the Civil War is an outburst of fierce creative energy in the nation, an acceleration of our normally dizzy economic tempo, and the natural consequences and concomitants of such vast forces operating at such furious speed. Booms, panics, economic wars, economic alliances known as trusts, economic banditry, corrupt politics, tremendous profits and tremendous bankruptcies—these are the familiar traits of the Gilded Age. But the business wars and peace treaties, the banditry and the corruption are not the heart of the story. They are minor incidents.

Especially would they be minor incidents by the very principles of the New History which are now so widely accepted and of which the Beards' study of American civilization is so distinguished an example. This new method of writing history has no interest in the old-style battles and processions, in the kings and the politicians. Its whole concern is with the play of economic and social forces. Professor Beard is one of our pioneers in the economic reinterpretation of American history, but oddly enough, in dealing with a strictly economic subject like the growth of business enterprise after the Civil War, he lets himself be carried away by the economic battles and peace treaties, by the economic politicians and warriors, by Jay Gould and John D. Rockefeller and J. P. Morgan; and he is compelled to remind himself, abruptly almost, at intervals of the basic play of social forces. By the doctrines of the New History, the social forces of the Gilded Age produced the dominating figures of the time; it was not the dominating figures that made the age. It is strange that historians who refuse to take more than a cursory interest in the battle of Trafalgar or Gettysburg as only picturesque events, should be so passionately interested in the picturesque methods by which Mr Rockefeller built up the Standard Oil Company. We say the methods by which it was built up and not the Standard Oil Company in itself, which is indeed an important economic and historical datum. In the eye of history it is really of little consequence whether a man named Rockefeller or a man named Smith built up a huge fortune in the burgeoning of America after the Civil War. The one important thing is America itself.

It is not the real story of railroad building after the Civil War to concentrate on how Congress "gave away" the public domain to the railroad builders and the huge fortunes which the promoters amassed. "Over a period of twenty-five years before 1872," says Professor Beard, "Government granted more than 150 million acres, equal to all New

England, New York and part of Pennsylvania." But note: "During the same period, States, cities and counties bonded themselves heavily to underwrite such enterprises." Why did these local agencies bind themselves if not in expectation of gain ultimately justified by the influx of settlers and the development of the country? How else could the railroads have been built? With a smaller rake-off for the promoters? Without political corruption and financial trickery and the rest? In an ideal world, yes. Our authors draw a grim picture and then erase it in one concluding paragraph.

Indeed, any radical alteration in financial policy would have checked railway construction. Risks in those days were large; losses were gigantic; and taking the bitter with the sweet, the earnings of the railroads in 1870, according to Charles Francis Adams, did not run much above a fair return on the actual money put into them.

Here, one would say, in a few lines, we have the heart of the story of railroad expansion in the Gilded Age. The development of the trans-Mississippi cried out for railroads, and the lines were built by methods of politics and finance that were often highly unconventional. A number of large personal fortunes were built up in the process, but, taking the bitter with the sweet, railway earnings in 1870 were not excessive, and the adoption of soberer, steadier methods would have checked the growth of the railroads so badly needed.

The usual story of railroad history after the Civil War gives very nearly all of its attention to the land grants that Congress "gave away" and the big fortunes built up by the Huntingtons, the Crockers and the J. J. Hills. That is the burden of the Beards' own story, if we go by the relative number of pages in their narrative. Even when they have given us the real story in a few brief words from Charles Francis Adams, they find themselves harking back to the earlier theme. We are reminded that Charles Francis Adams felt compelled to say, "Every expedient which the mind of man can devise has been brought into play to secure to the capitalist the largest possible profit with the least possible risk." To this our writers add the comment: "That was natural, if not magnanimous, and revealed the inward spirit of business enterprise." Our authors deplore the presence of the profit motive in business enterprise even when the profit motive builds railroads for the opening up of a continent, builds them by methods which on the whole were conceded the only ones possible, and in the long run builds them at not more than a reasonable profit.

Charles and Mary Beard published their *Rise of American Civilization*

half a dozen years before Mr Roosevelt's arrival in the White House. The mood and method of the chapter on the Gilded Age strikingly anticipate the New Deal outlook upon American business, and for that reason we have subjected it to a detailed scrutiny.

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The candid reinterpreter of the heroic age of American history is often the victim of his own method. He has scored a point when he demonstrates the all too human qualities of the Revolutionary patriots and Founding Fathers; but he has undermined his case against the men of today with whom his real quarrel lies. For he has only shown that they are not very different from the epic figures of one hundred and fifty years ago. The revaluator of the past is primarily interested in the present. He is dissatisfied with the United States Constitution as of 1939. Its defenders cite the great circumstances under which the Constitution was born and the great men and the great hopes that brought it forth. Thereupon the candid writer turns his guns on the plaster saints of 1787. He shows that the United States Constitution was not written by a conclave of saints and philosophers but by men very much like ourselves, acting from practical and selfish and even sordid motives. The economic reinterpretation of history is essentially pragmatic enterprise. We wish to make changes in the Constitution today; so we demonstrate that there is nothing sacred about the Constitution of 1787. Practical considerations brought the Constitution into being in 1787 just as practical considerations led the colonies to cast off British rule in 1776; and we in our turn must not shrink from listening to the call of our own times. That is why the conservative of 1939 holds that the men of 1787 were inspired. That is why the radical of 1939, and a good many years before, likes to point out that John Hancock was a smuggler, that George Washington was a large owner of Western lands which he had bought up in the form of soldiers' warrants, that Alexander Hamilton induced Congress to take over the state debts because the obligations had by that time passed out of the hands of the original owners and into the hands of speculators. It is no news that while General Washington's men were hungry and cold at Valley Forge the American farmers were only too happy to feed the British in near-by Philadelphia in return for good hard British money. Needless to say, the dishonest army contractor made his own contribution to the sufferings at Valley Forge.

And yet in the long run the critic of public life today can only hurt his own case by driving home the cynical lesson that it has always been

like that. The venal politician of today, the greedy capitalist, the corrupt public contractor, the judge who is swayed by class interest—they are all part of an old tradition. It is an interesting question whether a radical critic has scored or lost when he discovers a startling anticipation of some of today's regrettable banking practices in Robert Morris, the man who financed the latter part of the Revolution. Should one be too particular about the way a person raises the money to capture General Cornwallis and win a War of Independence? The New History teaches that George Washington was the wealthiest man in the country; he was the John D. Rockefeller of his day. Actually we may ask if it doesn't do Mr Rockefeller more good to be bracketed with George Washington than it hurts George Washington to be bracketed with Mr Rockefeller. If in the conquest of a Continent it turns out that there has always been what our candid vocabulary today calls pillage and speculation and land-grabbing, it puts in better light the pillagers of any one period. Men of the Gilded Age after the Civil War engaged in the same practices that flourished after the Revolutionary War. The profit motive in 1939 is close kin to the profit motive that wrote the Federal charter in 1787.

Land speculation raged in the Western country in 1784 when George Washington visited the Kanawha country. He found that scarcely a desirable spot within easy reach of the Ohio was without a claimant. "Men talked of fifty thousand acres or even five hundred thousand acres as easily as a gentleman once did of a thousand acres." A little while later Manasseh Cutler was negotiating with Congress for land grants to the Ohio Company. He was a man of education and a settled minister in Ipswich, Massachusetts, but, says Professor Channing:

He took not unkindly to the devious methods that were necessary in those days to put a contract through Congress, and the perusal of his journal inspires one with the thought that lobbying is by no means a modern art.

Manasseh Cutler found that things would be easier if he withdrew his own candidate for governor of the new Northwest Territory and proposed in his place the President of the Congress. He secured a grant of one and a half million acres for a price of one million dollars in depreciated Continental eight-cent dollars. The contract was signed in October 1787. Seventy-five years later the railroad builders of the West enjoyed the bounty of Congress in the form of vast areas of public land at ten cents an acre. But the promoter took his risks in 1787 when the exploitation of the Ohio Company's holdings was by no means an easy

task; in 1793 there were only two hundred and fifty settlers on the company's land. The promoter took risks in the years after the Civil War when railroad history consisted of a series of spurts interrupted by long periods of bankruptcy.

In the end we find that the critic of our present American civilization is really of two minds about the nation's past. In one mood he will stress the passing of the Frontier in 1890. The exhaustion of our free land ushers in a revolutionary change in the conditions of American life. Opportunity has vanished. Democracy has reached a turning point. The free movement of population and of classes has ended and we are embarked on the Old World road of social stratification and immobility. In other words, the land of today is not the happy land of our fathers as late as fifty years ago.

But then again, in a different mood, it appears that this has never been a happy land. America today is in all essentials the America of one hundred and fifty years ago. In those epic days, too, the profit motive ran riot. Contractors grew rich while the ragged Continentals froze at Valley Forge. Statesmen framed a Constitution for a new nation with an eye to their own personal and class interests. The noblest of the nation's leaders speculated in land and bought up soldiers' scrip for a song. The merchants and professional classes were arrayed against the mechanics and the lower orders, and the good fight begun by Samuel Adams and Thomas Jefferson in behalf of the plain people still waits to be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. Now it is the same country as that in 1787, and now it is a country changed beyond recognition since 1890.

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CHAPTER XI

Workers

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING in American industry was in its infancy fifty years ago. In 1881 the American Federation of Labor was founded on the ruins of the highly picturesque and ineffective Knights of Labor, but after twenty years, at the turn of the century, the Federation of Labor could show a membership of only half a million in an industrial working population between fifteen and twenty millions. Organized labor represented a minute fraction of two or three per cent of the nation's workers. Doctrine lagged even behind practice. Except in academic circles the trade-union principle was suspect and the attitude of American employers was overwhelmingly hostile.

Thirty-five years later the principle of collective bargaining stood written in the law of the land. Although the National Labor Relations Act of July 1935 brought forth criticism of a kind inevitable in the case of so elaborate a piece of pioneer legislation, the principle of collective bargaining in itself was endorsed by both major parties in the congressional elections of 1938 and by Republican spokesmen from whose ranks the party's Presidential candidate in 1940 seemed likely to be chosen. On the eve of that campaign the organized workers in the country numbered probably six to seven million. This would be between fifteen and twenty per cent of the nation's wage earners. It would be between twenty and twenty-five per cent of the working population of twenty-eight millions regarded as "organizable" by the leaders of the American Federation of Labor.

Organized labor's advance from a negligible fraction of the workers at the beginning of the century to nearly one fifth of all wage earners a generation later was achieved in two sharp forward movements. Once

more we have to take note of the first decade of the present century as a period of extraordinary national growth. We have seen that about the year 1900 the American Federation of Labor had perhaps half a million members. Ten years later the Federation, with the closely affiliated railway labor unions, had two million members. The proportion of organized workers had risen from two or three per cent to ten per cent of the nation's wage earners. In these ten years before 1910 the labor unions won as much ground as in the following twenty years. The high mark of four million members recorded by the Federation of Labor in 1920 was wartime expansion. Ten years later we find its membership, including the railway unions, at roughly three and a half million.

Another great forward movement began under the stimulus of President Roosevelt's sympathetic attitude to organized labor. After the 1936 election came the great drive to organize the mass-production industries and the clerical and unskilled trades hitherto neglected by the American Federation of Labor. This was the campaign set on foot by the Committee for Industrial Organization headed by John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America, one of the oldest and most powerful organizations in the American Federation of Labor. In the realm of theory the new movement upheld the industrial or vertical type of union against the horizontal or craft-union principle represented by the American Federation of Labor. Actually it was a movement to conquer new ground for trade unionism. The campaign enjoyed the strong moral support of the Roosevelt administration, which in turn profited greatly by Labor support in the election of 1936 with its stupendous Roosevelt majorities. The two principal targets of the C.I.O. campaign were the steel and automobile industries.

When the temporary Committee for Industrial Organization in November 1938 at a constituent convention in Pittsburgh took permanent shape as the Congress of Industrial Organizations, it reported more than four million members divided into more than forty national units. These figures, however, largely overstate the gains registered in the drive for industrial organization. Included in this number were more than six hundred thousand members of the United Mine Workers of America and more than half a million members of the two long-established national garment workers' unions; these were secessions from the American Federation of Labor. Of the new-born C.I.O. groups the two most important were the automobile workers with something less than four hundred thousand members and the half-million workers affiliated with the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee. Electrical and radio machine workers had one hundred and sixty

thousand members. Figures for other trades were regarded by competent judges as decidedly hypothetical, notably in the case of nearly half a million members under the Textile Workers' Organizing Committee. Such deductions would bring the membership of the new C.I.O. unions down to less than three million and reduce the actual conquest of new ground to two million workers.

When the C.I.O. nuclear unions began their campaign by seceding from the American Federation of Labor, that organization, with the railway unions, had perhaps five million members, of which a large number had been recruited in the stirring days of Mr Roosevelt's first administration. By the end of 1938, as the C.I.O. drive slowed down and the consolidation of conquered territory began, American organized labor consisted of four million members of the American Federation of Labor and something under three million members of the Congress of Industrial Organization. Louis Stark, the labor expert of the *New York Times*, wrote in March 1937 that organized labor was "far" from the ten million members which it set as its goal in the first flush of enthusiasm over the enactment of collective bargaining into law in 1935; though in a few years that goal might be attained.

Sharp fluctuations in labor-union strength have been the rule in the past. There was a great rise in union membership during the World War, in Great Britain as well as in this country, and there was a heavy decline in the next ten years in both countries. The C.I.O. skeleton formations are there for a great extension of union membership. Whether there is the element of permanency in a fisherman's union, an office worker's union or a union of oil-field operatives, is a matter of some doubt; although obviously it is a broad field of opportunity that contains labor unions of fishermen, government employees, newspapermen, toy workers and the Inland Boatmen's Union of the Pacific.

Basic to the problem is the fact that unionization apparently has its definite natural limits. We think of Great Britain as a country where union membership is universal. Actually the British trade unions at their postwar peak had only half of the nation's employees, and in the depression of the early 1930s the union members were only forty per cent of all insured British workers. This no doubt is at least double our own percentage of organized labor, but conditions in the two countries differ so widely that we may take it for granted we shall always be well behind Great Britain in relative union membership.

Nevertheless the record stands that in the course of half a century the country has changed from hostility toward organized labor to acceptance of the principle, though often grudging acceptance. Without being

too fanciful, one might say of the Wagner Act of 1935, setting up the principle of collective bargaining in industry, that it belongs in the same class with our famous Prohibition experiment as an example of characteristic American response to the forces of change. As a nation we like to seize upon a secular forward movement and to force the pace by means of compulsory legislation. The growth of temperance had been a world-wide movement extending over many years when we set out to liquidate intemperance at a blow, with unfortunate consequences.

Organized labor in the United States, as we saw at the beginning of our chapter, made impressive progress after a late start. The principle of industrial unionism was not new under President Roosevelt. Attempts to organize the mass-production industries gave rise to a great steel strike in 1919. Steel and automobiles would beyond doubt have been organized without the aid of the National Labor Relations Act and as part of the social and political consequences of the great business collapse of 1929. The aims to which the C.I.O. movement under John L. Lewis dedicated itself were neither novel nor revolutionary. This would be true of the technique of the sit-down strike which in essence did not derive from subversive foreign doctrine but from our ancient American tradition of lawlessness.

2

To the working classes of the Western nations, including the United States, the years after the World War brought a great lift in material and cultural well-being. If it should turn out that the business depression of the 1930s is indeed the crisis of Capitalism, then the cynical philosopher might argue, with a fair degree of plausibility, that Capitalism decreed its own doom in the first quarter of the twentieth century when it made a serious attempt to satisfy the demand for "justice" which has been the historic claim put forward in behalf of the plain people in all ages. In the decade after the Armistice the common people achieved greater gains than in any comparable term of years in history.

Real wages in the United States, it has been shown in studies of which the best known are those of Professor Paul H. Douglas, showed a gain of one third between the beginning of the century and the year 1930. Real wages are the amount of food, shelter, clothes and other creature satisfactions which money wages will buy at any period. They are money wages in relation to prices. A notable lift in the standard of living was recorded in Great Britain over a broadly corresponding period. Living conditions fifty years ago were described by Charles Booth in his monumental work, *Life and Labour of the People of London*, which

appeared in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The main theme of Booth's inquiry was the extent and distribution of poverty in the British metropolis. In 1929 a new survey of the same ground was carried out by the London School of Economics. The new investigators adopted, for purposes of strict comparison, the standards and definitions of forty years ago. They found that in the year 1929 the proportion of people living below Charles Booth's "poverty line" was somewhere between one third and one fourth of the proportion in 1889. The population covered in the new survey was not far short of six million, and the number of people who were found living below the Booth "poverty line" was something less than half a million. If conditions of life described by Booth had prevailed in 1929, the number of Londoners below the "poverty line" would have been one and a half million instead of less than half a million. It is hardly necessary to state that, by our present-day ideas on poverty, the number of London's underprivileged would be much greater. Standards have moved up with material conditions; but we are concerned now with the measure of progress achieved.

Issue could hardly be taken with the director of the London Survey of 1929 when he declared, in his statement of general findings and conclusions:

There is little ground for complacency when it is remembered that, notwithstanding all the improvement, nearly half a million inhabitants of the London Survey Area were found to be living in 1929 below a poverty line fixed according to the low standards of a past generation.

Nevertheless this warning against smugness was in the nature of a reservation to a general verdict which announced a "vast diminution of poverty in its severest forms during the forty years which separate the present survey from Charles Booth's original inquiry."

This notable British experiment in social diagnosis presents the substance of our own experience. The London inquiry reaches back ten years into the nineteenth century, but that is of little consequence; for by far the largest part of the gain in both countries was recorded in the present century and, for that matter, after the outbreak of the World War. Real wages in this country about the year 1900 show a variation of two or three points up or down from the 1914 base of one hundred; but in the years 1926-28 our index of real wages ranges between one hundred and thirty-two and one hundred and thirty-eight.

It may occur to the reader that this gain of one third in real wages in the United States is far below the rate of progress indicated in our

figures from the London Survey. There the improvement has been apparently several hundred per cent by the test of the "poverty line." But obviously the reduction of the most abject forms of London poverty was much greater than the lift in the general well-being of all the people. On the other hand the increase in American real wages does not give the full measure of progress in the general standard of living. We must take into account a great increase in the public and social services which contribute to the enrichment of mass life. The economists' cost-of-living charts do not take cognizance of schooling for the people, and in the years after the World War there was an unprecedented expansion of educational opportunity. With us the high schools and colleges have long been open to the children of the poor, but the years after 1920 saw an enormous accentuation of the trend. At the beginning of the century only one child of high-school age out of every fifteen went to high school, and in 1930 it was one child in every two. In 1900 one young person in thirty of college age was in college, and in 1930 it was one out of every seven. No such rate of progress was recorded in England or in Germany, yet the gains there, too, were notable. In one sense the conquests of educational opportunity by the common people of Western Europe were more impressive than our own because over there it meant a victory for the American idea that higher education is the equal right of all the children in the community. Both in Great Britain and in Germany it meant the abandonment of the double standard in education which prescribed elementary schools for the masses of the nation and reserved the high schools and universities for the middle and upper classes.

Freer access to educational opportunity can be measured in actual dollars and cents. At the beginning of the century the public-school budget in New York City stood at fifty dollars for every child of school age. In 1930 it was one hundred and fifty dollars for every child. For the average working-class family with two children of school age this meant an increase of two hundred dollars a year in free school services in the course of a generation; it would be ten per cent of the family income. For the adult members of the family there was a notable rise in recreational opportunities, free or attainable at a modest price. To the people of New York the five-cent fare in 1939 meant a great deal more than it did in 1900. In the earlier year the trolley-car ride at that price conveyed to the beaches and the outlying parks and playgrounds only a small fraction of the crowds which the subways carry today.

But the chief element in recreation is leisure. We have said that in the year 1930 American workers received one third more in real wages—

that is to say, were one third better off materially—than in the year 1900. There is the further consideration that this greater supply of goods and satisfactions was obtained with the expenditure of less labor. At the beginning of the century the standard working day was ten hours, and in 1930 it was eight hours. The arithmetical calculation of one third greater returns secured by one fifth less labor comes out as a real gain of two thirds. By the test of higher wages and shorter hours the American worker was sixty or seventy per cent better off in 1930 than in 1900. If to these concrete figures we add the considerations stated above—the gains in free education and in free or cheap recreation—we shall not be very far from the truth in saying that in the year 1930 the American wage earner was almost twice as well off as he was at the beginning of the century. In the course of a generation his well-being had very nearly doubled. By far the greater portion of the gain was achieved in the years after the Armistice.

We may go back, at this point, to a glimpse of British conditions. In 1934 the distinguished journalist, J. A. Spender, wrote in the *Current History* magazine about Great Britain's serious unemployment problem, especially in the Depressed Areas:

On the other side, there have been evidences in the life of the people of a diffused prosperity such as no Englishman of my age can remember in his life-time. All through these years of depression the great mass of the working people have been drawing higher wages, have been better fed, better clothed, and able to spend more on sport and pleasure than ever before. Even the unemployed have drawn allowances exceeding in many cases the wages of unskilled labor before the war.

We find a parallel condition in this country. In the unhappy year 1933 our national income had fallen to forty-two billion dollars from eighty-one billion dollars in 1929. Yet the National Industrial Conference Board estimated the average income of the nation's workers, including the unemployed, at seven hundred and ninety dollars against seven hundred and eighteen dollars in the year 1909, with the price index a few points lower in 1933. This means that with more than one fourth of the working population idle, the general mass of well-being in 1933 was fifteen per cent higher under what we regarded as catastrophic conditions than it was normally in 1909.

3

Karl Marx's famous prophecy of the doom of the middle classes is one more instance of the seer's vision going sadly astray. What we have

witnessed is not the disappearance but the growth and enhancement of the middle classes, or, in any event, the triumphant advance of the middle-class way of life. Karl Marx foresaw the bourgeoisie crushed between the millstones of capitalism and proletarianism. He saw the small businessman and proprietor ruined by the big Trusts and reduced to the proletarian status, until finally there were only a few economic masters at the top and a horde of economic serfs at the bottom of the social pyramid.

In the industrially advanced nations just the opposite began to happen even in the prophet's lifetime. Almost fifty years ago Marx's countryman, the Socialist dissident, Eduard Bernstein, showed that in Germany the small businessmen were not being squeezed out but on the contrary were growing in number; and if middle class meant the professional classes and the white-collar trades, its growth would be still more impressive. Today in the United States the old Marxian forecast can only evoke a smile. Widespread fear of mass unemployment produced by technological advance would suggest that it is the working class and not the middle class that is disappearing. The situation is summed up in the once familiar gibe that not all the workers displaced by machinery can find employment as bond salesmen. Fewer and fewer workers are now concerned with production, and more and more with the rendering of services. In 1930 we had, outside of agriculture, more than forty million persons gainfully employed. Of these the employees in manufacturing and the mechanical industries numbered fourteen million. Of these again the factory workers, who serve as the common type of proletarian, were about nine million; so that we might say that one worker in the factory produced enough goods to keep four persons occupied outside the factory.

Karl Marx might have said, and many of his belated followers do say it now, that the clerical worker or the store clerk is as much a wage slave as the factory hand or the unskilled laborer. But in practice we know that the temper of the white-collar man is, in the vast majority, a middle-class temper. We must not be deceived by facile assertions of a revolutionary change in the spirit and outlook of the American wage earner in the nonmechanical trades in the years after 1930, as signaled in the expansion of trade unionism and the new era of protective social legislation. Unions of office workers and store clerks lend themselves offhand to the interpretation that the nonmanual trades are being proletarianized. When newspaper writers organize a trade union it suggests that the American reporter has definitely broken with the legend of American opportunity which makes every farm boy a potential President of the

United States, every railroad track-walker a potential president of the company and every printer's devil a potential Joseph Pulitzer or Adolph S. Ochs. To enter a trade union is to confess that one expects to remain all his lifetime a wage earner. It affirms the stratification of classes. If to this we add the new national policy of social security—unemployment insurance, old age pensions and other forms of collective protection—we seem to see the traditional middle-class spirit of independence and self-reliance fading out to make way for the proletarian mentality of static dependence.

Such conclusions are premature. Years must elapse before we can say with confidence that a Newspaper Guild is really the end of an epoch in American psychology. In the early phase of the first Roosevelt administration the nation's purposes were supposed to hover between business recovery and social reform. Between the middle of Mr Roosevelt's first administration and the middle of his second administration the emphasis appeared to shift from Recovery to Reconstruction. That was the period of trade-union expansion and social protective legislation, when the mood of the people might well be said to have shifted from the old individualism to the new tenets of security. But the congressional election of 1938 showed that the American people had never ceased to think of Recovery first. Time must show whether the new philosophy of the sheltered life has struck in deep, whether it can maintain itself against an upsurge of old-time prosperity. It is far too early to say that the average American wage earner has come to look upon himself as a wage slave.

Counter-proletarian forces are in the meanwhile at work. The notable rise in the standard of living among the workers would mean that in the last generation the workers have been moving forward to the middle-class way of life and the middle-class outlook. We must think not only of material values, the increase in real wages, the lift in food, housing, dress, comforts, but also of the gain in leisure. The historic contrast has been between the toil-worn workers and the leisured classes. When we compare the factory worker in 1880 and in 1930 we are comparing a working day of twelve hours with one of eight hours. We are comparing a working week of seventy hours with a working week of forty hours. It is a transformation in which the historic class name "toilers" has lost much of its ancient meaning.

What are some of the characteristics of the middle-class way of life as usually described or taken for granted? A life of useful work that is not crushing toil; food, shelter and dress of a standard to conserve health and minister to seemliness and self-respect; education; recreation in the physical and cultural realm; provision for the future; access for the chil-

dren to opportunity in the gainful occupations and in public life. With this sketch outline of the traditional middle-class life, we can better evaluate the traditional status of the American worker, on the forty-five-hour week or the forty-hour week, in his apartment (or one-family home) equipped with bath, radio and electric light, his automobile in many instances, his children in school and high school and not rarely in college, his sports, his summer vacation, his newspapers, his magazines, his labor union or political club. The subject does not demand exhaustive treatment; a picturesque if trivial instance will serve. It concerns the achievement by American workingmen of the black dinner jacket or tuxedo as part of social dress. Before the Armistice there were American wage earners who for exceptional occasions such as a wedding or a ball donned the starched shirt and open vest of the middle classes; but it was nearly always a hired costume. By the year 1930 many American wage earners wore their own evening clothes on other than solemn occasions.

The automobile and the dinner jacket with black tie—the command of space and the command of festal decorum—have ceased to be exclusive middle-class distinctions. The ratio of dinner jackets is no doubt very much higher among members of the middle class than among the workers, but the symbolic conquest has been made. The middle-class children in the high schools are much more numerous than working-class sons and daughters, and even more so in the colleges. Millions of workers live in tenements, and the chances of their children becoming President of the United States or of the local bank are considerably lower than those of the middle-class children. But we are discussing only the relative position, the trend. It is a question whether the worker today feels the distance between himself and his employer to be smaller than it was a generation ago. It is a question whether the doctrine of vanishing opportunity appeals to the workers as much as it does to the middle-class theorists. Perhaps the best example of what we have called counter-proletarianization at work would be the problem of the future of our colleges. Even while the Newspaper Guild was supposed to attest the hardening of social lines in America and a tragic shrinkage in opportunity, a school of thought represented by President Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago urged the pressing need of reorganizing our colleges against the time when all American boys and girls would be free to go to college, as more than half of them in 1930 were going to high school.

CHAPTER XII

Machines

A FEELING OF PANIC and dismay in the presence of the Machine seized upon a large section of the articulate American public in the darkest days of the business depression. It was a state of mind largely arising from the failure to grasp the true nature of a machine. At one time the idle workers in all countries may have numbered twenty-five million. It was unemployment on a scale never previously experienced in the industrial age. It was an economic crisis which brought in its wake political and social crises of the first moment. Even here at home, susceptible or timid citizens wondered about Revolution. There was a time when democracy as a principle was on the defensive in its original home in England, the United States and France. The capitalist system was pronounced moribund by respectable thinkers. An old world was dying and, it was hoped, out of its agony a new world order was being born. Chief among the forces operating to this end, symptom and cause in one, was, in the popular phrase, technological unemployment.

The dread efficiency of the machines was destroying the modern world which machines had done so much to build up. Machines began by displacing human labor. They now seemed bent on making the human worker wholly superfluous. Up to our own time special conditions helped to regulate the progress of the machines or to keep the world's demand for goods in line with increased productivity. But somewhere about the end of the nineteenth century the pace of the machines began to accelerate at a fearful rate. From casual or individual machine invention we entered on an age of systematic and stimulated invention, the invention of invention. The menace of the machines passed into the much more

sinister menace of Power as the Machine Age became the Power Age. The steam engine itself was a cumbrous individualist device requiring human labor to minister to its needs, compared with this threat of Power launched across the distances by throwing a switch.

The mounting tempo of technology took a new forward leap in the World War. Human ingenuity made giant strides in perfecting machines and methods so as to release men for the battlefield and provide them with the enormous stocks of goods which modern war consumes. These conquests of invention naturally were not forgotten after the Armistice when normal consumption returned. The result was glut and catastrophic unemployment and political and social convulsion.

We have summed up a familiar doctrine and outlook. Displacement of human labor by machines is as old a problem as the Industrial Revolution. The story of the machine-smashing Luddites of Napoleonic days in Great Britain had come to be accepted as typical of the price in human dislocation and suffering which the advance of a mechanical civilization exacts. Nevertheless the economists and the lay public up to the end of the World War were generally agreed that the evil wrought by the machines is fractional for the nation as a whole and temporary even for the displaced workers. The gains for the general good outweigh the hardships of hand weavers displaced by the textile machines, of carters and porters displaced by the railroad, of wagon builders and horse breeders displaced by the automobile. Before long the superseded workers will have found a place in the industrial scheme, often in a trade closely allied to their former occupation; though always a certain amount of distress, far from negligible quantitatively and still more so when measured in individual terms, will be the price paid for the march of invention.

Technological unemployment, then, up to the advent of the economic collapse of the 1930s was a problem. It then took on rapidly the character of a doom. The old school of thought saw technological unemployment as a transitional and minor economic fact. The new doctrine made it a permanent and expanding phase of our new high-speed industrialism. The army of displaced men was bound to grow with the growing momentum of invention. Unless a new social system emerged on the scene to take control of our industrial machines and operate them under radically new principles of production and consumption there was no escape from catastrophic unemployment.

And yet it is obvious that to arrive at such conclusions it is not really necessary that our modern machines should be endowed with such dread

potency. Karl Marx prophesied on the basis of a much slower machine tempo. The years after the Armistice were years of great change in what we may call arithmetical thinking. The war and its sequels endowed mankind with statistics on a scale that dwarfed all previous experience. War casualties, wasted treasure, national debts and inflated currencies attained dimensions properly described as astronomical. It was perhaps inevitable that the power of the machines should be described in the same hypertrophied arithmetic. It was a state of mind and a creed resting on two main errors. In the first place, the gospel of technological catastrophe grossly misrepresented the actual facts about machines, labor saving and unemployment. In the second place, it failed to make the necessary distinction between real machines and pseudo machines.

A shining example of the temper and of the methods displayed in the new preachment of doom by the machine concerns the growth of mechanical power in the nation between the years 1899 and 1929. This was frequently cited as the cause of and index to the dizzy pace of mechanization which we have been discussing. The figures are indeed impressive. Taking the energy in all American engines in the year 1899 as a basic one hundred, a study by the United States Geological Survey found that in 1929 the index was 2610. In other words it would appear that in just one generation the amount of mechanical power utilized by the nation's industries had multiplied twenty-sixfold. Here was a truly terrifying rate of acceleration. If the trend and the rate of acceleration continued it justified the prophecies of a catastrophic displacement of human labor.

When the Geological Survey figures are examined a little more closely the picture is very seriously modified. The horsepower in the nation's engines in 1929 was indeed twenty-six times as great as in 1899; but if from the calculation we exclude all automobile engines then the index in 1929 was not 2610 but only 385. The increase in mechanical energy was not twenty-five times but less than three times. If from the calculation we exclude only private automobiles, the index for the year 1929 gets down to 636. What these figures mean is this: of all the energy in the nation's engines nearly two thousand out of every 2616 horsepower, or about eighty per cent, would be found in the motors of family automobiles in the garages of America's private homes. Another eight per cent was contained in the engines of commercial motorcars, buses and trucks. These may be accepted as answering to the definition of a machine in the same sense that the steam locomotive is a machine. Only twelve per cent of the nation's mechanical energy in 1929 was harnessed to the machine proper, the machine as we commonly picture it, the machine used in

making things for ultimate consumption. Another authoritative study makes the consumption of mechanical energy in the country in 1899 to be one hundred, and in 1929 to be three hundred and thirty. Mechanization in 1929, therefore, was approximately three and a half times of what it was at the beginning of the century. That increase in itself might perhaps be large enough to create grave economic and social problems for the nation; but plainly the difference is immense between an increase of two hundred and fifty per cent in the country's productive capacity and an increase of twenty-five hundred per cent. It was on the basis of this latter wholly fictitious and wholly absurd figure that prophecies were promulgated of a social system driven to its doom by the mad acceleration of the wheels of the machine.

The error of counting the horsepower in pleasure automobiles as part of the horsepower of the nation's production plant brings us to our second point. This has to do with the failure to grasp the true meaning of the machine in discussions of technological progress and social revolution. The private automobile which consumed eighty per cent of all the mechanical energy developed in the country in 1929 is not really a machine. It is not a tool. The motorcar may be a machine to the aesthete and the moralist because it stands for inanimate activity in place of living activity. The automobile is not a machine to the engineer discussing technological unemployment because the private automobile is not a tool. Eighty per cent of the nation's mechanical power is contained in engines that are not used to produce goods or render services that would be otherwise produced or rendered by human labor. Minor exceptions would be the commuter's automobile between his house and the railway station, which displaces the professional hackman, and similar utilitarian moments in what is, essentially, a pleasure vehicle. Essentially, the automobile is not a machine but a toy. It is not producer's goods but consumer's goods.

This observation holds good for many other so-called machines of our mechanical civilization. They are undeniably mechanical, but they are not machines; a true machine must be both inanimate and useful. It must be a tool. If it is an object in itself it ceases to be a machine and becomes a plaything. In the typical mechanized American home possibly four fifths of all the so-called machines, as measured in cost and importance, are not machines at all. They do not produce goods for the family to consume or render services which would otherwise be performed by human labor. In the average comfortable American home the vacuum cleaner is an authentic machine because it is a tool for cleaning carpets formerly beaten and scrubbed by hand. But the radio in the living room

is not a tool; it is only a satisfaction, like the piano. The washing machine in the kitchen or cellar is a machine because it is a tool. The electric iron, toaster, coffeepot and rheumatism pad are machines because they are tools or utensils; the gramophone, for all its mechanical humming and buzzing and whirring, is not a tool, any more than the Metropolitan Opera soprano is a tool. The electric light, pioneer and symbol of the Power Age, is perhaps ten per cent tool. By far the greater part of the satisfaction derived from the electric lamps in the house is in the light and glow itself, not in the help for reading and sewing. The telephone is a machine when it is used in business offices as a substitute for messengers and correspondence clerks and it is a machine in the house when it is used to communicate with the grocer, the butcher and the doctor. It is then a labor-saving device. The telephone is not a machine when it is used for social conversation. It then performs nothing useful in an economic sense. It is recreation and a plaything.

We have then the paradox that the machines which chiefly popularize the idea of a Machine Age are not machines at all. These are the motion picture, the radio, and above all, the automobile, of which the last is pre-eminently the Machine. It is omnipresent in our American life. It covers the streets and the roads. Perhaps one consumer of electric light in ten thousand will chance in the course of a year to catch a glimpse of the great turbines somewhere on the edge of the city which grind out the kilowatts for light, power and heat. Still fewer American citizens have seen with their own eyes the great machines at Pittsburgh, Gary and Birmingham which make iron and steel for the housing of the nation; or the textile machines which clothe it; or the baking and cooking machines which feed it. We have a much closer acquaintance with that very old machine, the locomotive, and city crowds have daily intimate contact with the machines of Rapid Transit; but even the locomotive engine, steam, electric, or Diesel, is secondary in the national consciousness to the automobile. It is today the outstanding symbol of American civilization; but the automobile, as we have seen, is not a machine. The average American's automobile is no more a machine than the rich American's polo pony is a machine.

This distinction is of the first importance. It is a safeguard against a vast amount of loose and panicky talk concerning our machine civilization, and particularly the breakdown of our existing economic system through the catastrophic displacement of human labor by the machine. It makes a vast difference in our feeling about the future of industrial civilization if we think of America's thirty million automobiles as tools, or as chiefly luxuries. In the one case thirty million powerful machines

are engaged in taking the bread out of the mouth of working men and women. In the other case they displace few workers; they take bread away from few; they give employment, on the contrary, to many million workers.

2

We are now in a position to inquire a little more closely into the speed of modern machines that are authentic machines; in other words, the pace and acceleration of our modern productive system. The wage earner might well shiver at the thought of the scrap heap awaiting him when he hears of machines which turn out twenty-six hundred cigarettes a minute; which produce nine thousand electric light bulbs for every one formerly produced by hand; which can grind thirty thousand barrels of flour a day, or bake four hundred thousand bricks a day per man, or develop three hundred thousand horsepower a day, equivalent to the energy of nine million men. That last crushing figure is enough by itself to spell a message of doom for the wage earner. When a single machine can apparently do the work of nine million men the end would indeed be in sight for the living breadwinner under the present economic and social system.

Yet the error here is obvious. The theoretical speed of our fastest machine is represented as the actual realized speed of all our machines. It is implied that every wheel in our industrial plant spins around as fast as the cigarette-making machine, or the incandescent lamp machine, if not indeed as fast as the revolutions of the turbine which develops nine million man power a day. The average man knows that this is not so. He can think of machines and mechanical processes which are fast but which palpably do not move at anything like such dizzy speed. He can think of a great many trades and occupations in which the machine does not yet count for much or at all. And then the further thought occurs that the strength of a chain is that of its weakest link; the speed of a relay team is the speed of its slowest runner.

It is strange that the pace of our modern industrial machines should be measured just the opposite way in an industrial system so highly articulated and interdependent. Plainly, the tempo of the cigarette machine does not measure the speed at which cotton is cultivated. The tempo of the brick-working machine is not the speed at which bricks are laid. The speed of the transcontinental airplane mail from New York to Los Angeles is not the speed at which wheat and coal move up and down the United States. Freight trains in 1930 went about three hundred miles a day against three hundred miles an hour for the airplane.

The wildest arithmetic in the technology argument has, as a matter of fact, not escaped challenge; yet people, while dismissing such calculations as unrepresentative or possibly even fantastic, have still wondered if the heart of the matter was not there. After the most generous discount for special pleading is it not still true that the speed of our machines today is being accelerated at an unprecedented rate? Production is being stepped up at an unprecedented rate. Human labor is being displaced at an unprecedented rate. The economic and social structure is being subjected to strains and stresses of unprecedented severity. There is no reassurance in lessons from the past because the past never knew such momentum, such vibration, such dislocation, such breath-taking transitions as we must face.

The historical record does not bear out this statement of the case. Acceleration in our Power Age has not been, on the average, swifter than in the early Machine Age. Factory wheels since the World War have not been speeded up faster than at any other period in the history of the Industrial Revolution. Contemporaries of Mr Samuel Pickwick gave up traveling by coach for the new steam cars and were accelerated ten to fifteen times. Today the traveler who used to cross the United States by the fast trains and now goes by airplane has been accelerated six or seven times. If the bold vision of journeying by sealed rockets through the stratosphere should come true and people go from Paris to New York at a thousand miles an hour, they will be accelerated from the present airplane speed three or four times. The jar will be only one third to one fifth as sharp as that which Mr Pickwick's generation received from the steam locomotive, and survived handsomely.

Mr Pickwick's countrymen survived, as we know from the subsequent record; but during his own lifetime, in the first twenty years of the railroad, there were severe business depressions and bitter hard times, starving times, when people in the England of 1840 reasoned much like people in the United States of 1932. Thomas Carlyle and William Cobbett believed that society could not survive the furious acceleration of the industrial machine one hundred years ago.

Consumption of mechanical power in industry measures the acceleration in the speed of our machines. The figures on the subject do not reveal anything like an unprecedented rise in speed and vibration since the World War. In the year 1869 when our census authorities began to take note of the mechanical energy developed in the nation's factories they found sixty-two horsepower for every thousand inhabitants. By the year 1929 energy consumption in manufactures had risen to three hundred and fifty horsepower for every thousand inhabitants. In sixty years

our per capita consumption of mechanical power had risen to sixfold. Our factory world on the eve of the 1929 collapse spun around six times as fast as it did just after the Civil War. The ratio is confirmed if we go beyond the horsepower in factories. We may compare the total consumption of power derived from all sources—coal, oil, natural gas, water power. About 1870 the consumption of all forms of energy was equivalent to 1.4 tons of bituminous coal per head of the population. In 1926 the consumption of energy was equivalent to 8.3 tons per head of the population. The increase of momentum in approximately sixty years since the Civil War was almost exactly five times.

How much faster did the wheels of American industry after the Civil War spin around than in the year 1790 when the Industrial Revolution came to America? Our per capita consumption of energy in 1870 was easily ten to fifteen times as great as it was during George Washington's first administration, when a few thousand small water wheels represented all the mechanical power in the country. Our industrial world in 1870 was moving with ten to fifteen times the momentum of 1791, when Alexander Hamilton was writing his Report on Manufactures.

We may say, then, in approximate terms that the year 1870 saw American machines working ten to fifteen times as fast as at the beginning of the century, and in 1930 they were six times as fast as in 1870. The era of U. S. Grant had been accelerated at least ten times over the era of George Washington, but the year 1929 found us accelerated only six times over the times of U. S. Grant. It is hard to see how the collapse of 1929 could have been brought about, in itself, by an unprecedented acceleration of technology. The speeding up of our machine was far from unparalleled.

This remains true if we concentrate on the ten years after the Armistice. Some would have it that only about the year 1919 did the whirl of our machines take on a fury that shook our economic system to pieces in the space of ten years. The figures for energy consumption over a period of sixty years do not bear out the theory of a fatal decade. If we start in 1870 and measure the increase in the nation's energy consumption by ten-year periods we find that in the 1880s the gain was fifty-seven per cent; in the 1890s it was thirty-seven per cent; in the 1900s it was sixty per cent; in the 1910s it was thirty-seven per cent; in 1921-25 it was eleven per cent. Of industry as a whole our factories are supposed to reveal the acceleration of tempo in peculiarly malignant form, yet we find that in the decade before 1929 the per capita increase of horsepower in the factories was twenty-five per cent. For preceding decades the gains were thirty-seven per cent in the decade after 1910; fifty-three per cent after 1900; thirty-nine per cent after 1890. Acceleration in the ten years

before the Spanish-American War was greater than in the ten years after the World War.

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It is not to be supposed that the average man's dread of technological progress can be wholly exorcised by close statistical reasoning. As long as the nation has a problem of mass unemployment our primitive suspicion and fear of the machine will reassert itself. The past record will be misread, and the dire potentialities of the future will be magnified. People will exaggerate the speed of machines. They will speak of laboratory experiments as accomplished fact. They will speak of mere conjecture as established universal fact.

It is a state of mind encountered outside the field of strict machine technology. The doom of the American farmer has been predicted on the basis of "farm-tested" methods which show that all of this nation's food now grown on two hundred and fifty million acres can be grown on forty million acres. Figures are made to show that in raising wheat and potatoes, our present efficiency is between five and eight per cent of the "possible" efficiency. Once upon a time, before vast unemployment had induced widespread fear of machines and scientific progress in general, it was a matter of common knowledge that the most efficient steam engine of the day extracted only four or five per cent of the latent energy in steam coal. In other words, ninety-five per cent of the potential energy in the coal shoveled into the firebox of a locomotive passed out of the engine stack in the form of smoke. This low coefficient of coal energy was formerly cited as one of the limitations upon man's mastery of nature. It was a reminder to be humble in the face of man's impressive technical triumphs, though it was also cited, no doubt, as an inducement to press on to better results. As a matter of fact, in the course of twenty years after the outbreak of the World War notable progress was made in fuel combustion. The coefficient of developed energy in coal rose to six per cent of the potential. This was a notable advance since it meant an increase in fuel efficiency of twenty-five to fifty per cent over the earlier coefficient.

The new antitechnological approach refuses to take note of the fact that it required twenty years of technical progress to raise the effective energy of the steam engine from four or five per cent to six per cent. It concentrates on the fact that steam engines utilize only six per cent of the latent energy in coal. It then asks us to imagine what will happen to industry, to the entire industrial system, and to the entire social system when we get around to utilizing one hundred per cent of the available

power in our fireboxes; a consummation, it is strongly hinted, which may come about almost any day, or in any case, very soon. It is the same method employed in theoretically increasing the acre yield of potatoes twenty times, and increasing the speed of street paving a thousand times by means of a road-building super-machine. Over a period of fifty years technological improvements have cut down the working day in industry from twelve hours to eight hours at the beginning of the 1930s; but from that point there were people to argue that by properly using our machines we could endow the American people with a standard of living ten times as high as it now enjoys by working half the present employed population two hours a day.

Doctrinaires and enemies of the existing social system are only a section of the great body of public opinion acutely concerned over the displacement of workers by the machine. Here we find that the chief single cause for anxiety consists in the mistake of arguing from conditions in one particular form of employment, namely factory labor. The authentic figures do show that in the year 1919 we had in manufactures nine million wage earners who produced goods to the value of sixty-two billion dollars. In 1929 goods to the value of seventy billion dollars were produced by two hundred thousand fewer wage earners than in 1919. Here was an increase in output between ten and fifteen per cent in ten years, accompanied by an actual decline in factory employment. It seemed plain that the saturation point for employment in industry had been reached. Henceforth fewer and fewer workers would be needed to produce more and more goods. In the face of ten to fifteen million men out of work no one could doubt that we were already confronted with technological unemployment on a huge scale.

The argument from shrinking factory employment and increased factory output fails to grasp the complete nature of labor saving through improved machines and improved methods. Specifically, it fails to take note of what may be called the element of concealed factory employment. The fact is overlooked that an increasing amount of factory work is being done outside the factories. Observers were disquieted by a decline of two hundred thousand wage earners in the factories between 1919 and 1929 while production went up; but during the same period—between the Federal census of 1920 and of 1930—the number of wage earners in the group of which factory workers are a part showed a notable increase. This group in the census is called Manufacturing and Mechanical Industries, and it showed an increase of nearly 1,350,000 workers. Factory workers went down from nine million to 8,839,000. Employees in all manufacturing and mechanical industries went up from 12,832,000 to

14,110,000. More than five million industrial workers were outside the factories. The construction industry employed perhaps three million workers. Another large class would be the mechanics in the automobile garages who keep the nation's motor traffic moving. Indeed, we might add to the 1,350,000 new workers in the industries a considerable part of the 750,000 new workers recorded by the census under the head of Transportation.

How does a carpenter, a mason, a garage mechanic, a railroad worker, a chauffeur or a telephone operator qualify as a "concealed" factory worker? They do so as members of the nation's Service of Supply. They feed the combatant troops of industry who are the factory workers. Primitive warfare has no commissariat, train, engineers or signal corps. In primitive warfare the whole able-bodied population on both sides meet on the front line and hack away and stab away at each other. Behind them there are only the old men, the women and the children, helplessly awaiting the outcome of the fight. But in the World War it was estimated that six or seven men were needed behind the lines to keep one man in the trenches. The man in the front line focused in himself the energies of the other six behind him. The six men in the zone of the rear, extending as far back as the munition workers at home, the coal diggers and lumbermen at home, were invisible combatants.

Efficiency of factory labor can be increased outside the factory or outside the factory worker's hours. When a large garment factory installs electric power and thereby increases output, part of the increased output is the work of the powerhouse operatives who furnish the electricity that drives the sewing machines a hundred miles away; but the powerhouse employee is not regarded as a factory worker. In the years after the World War there was a vast reconstruction of industrial plant. Grim factory walls of brick and stone, almost as jealous of light and air as the penal institutions of the period, gave way to light and cheerful structures looking like public high schools. Light, ventilation, temperature and even such refinements as the "optimum" standard of air humidity and circulation became commonplaces of modern factory construction. It is obvious that part of the increased output obtained from the factory worker in his modern, well-lighted, well-aired workroom must be credited to the ironworkers, the masons, the carpenters and the plumbers who built the new factory. That is why we must keep in mind the figures cited a little while ago. In the decade after 1920 the factory workers fell off by two hundred thousand; but the ironworkers, masons, carpenters, electricians, plumbers, painters and glaziers went up by four hundred thousand, of whom a very considerable number may be described as con-

cealed factory workers. They are part of a process of which we may see the reverse some day if prefabricated houses become a fact. People will then say that technology is destroying employment because the prefabricated homes have thrown masons and carpenters out of work. People will not be at great pains to mention the large number of men who have found work in the factories making house parts to be set up by the building trades outside.

Between 1920 and 1930 the number of workers in the census category of Transportation and Communication increased by seven hundred and fifty thousand. A considerable number of the newcomers were concealed factory workers. The speeding up of transportation has played an important role in the speeding up of industry. Merchants have learned to get on with smaller stocks because of increased speed in delivery from factory and wholesaler. The retailer who can get his consignment of goods in days instead of weeks can do with less storage space and with less capital. The factory owner who can get his raw material in less time can do more than save on storage space. A swifter inward flow of raw material and outward movement of the finished product makes possible a better balanced production scheme, with attendant economies. In other words, we may speak of the whole structure of American industrial production after the World War as adopting the conveyor-belt principle of a free and even flow of materials, with transportation a vital factor. The railway worker, the motor-truck chauffeur and the telephone girl on Long Distance, who speeded up the movement of goods in the decade after the World War, may again be described as concealed factory workers. If there were not so many truckmen and garagemen and telephone girls outside of the factory we should have had more men actually tending the machine inside the factory.

We may go even further. We may discover some of our two hundred thousand vanished factory workers among the white-collar workers, among the employees in trade, in the professions. The new model factories of steel and glass were built not only by ironworkers and masons and carpenters; they were also built by architects and civil and electrical engineers whose numbers increased by nearly seventy-five thousand between 1920 and 1930. Add more than forty thousand designers and draftsmen and we have more than half of our two hundred thousand vanished factory workers. The modern factory promotes efficiency by safeguarding the health of the worker. It operates first-aid systems, recreation rooms, rest rooms and lunch rooms, thus making employment for doctors, nurses, waiters, waitresses and cooks whom the census enumerators do not include among factory workers. They are recorded

among the professional workers, who in the decade after 1920 grew by more than one million persons, or under the head of Domestic and Personal Service, which added more than a million and a half workers.

The argument of concealed or invisible factory employment, as here developed, is only incidental and subsidiary to the classic case on the displacement of labor by the machine. Labor-saving devices increase consumption by lowering prices. Often the increased demand is so great as to require more workers to operate the new machines. This is the commonplace of the Industrial Revolution; but for the present our interest lies in demonstrating that the actual rate of labor displacement has been greatly exaggerated by those who overlook the element of concealed factory employment. The displaced factory worker is not under the necessity of transforming himself into a bond salesman, as the satirists would have it, or a masseur at an athletic club. The factory mechanic may become a garage mechanic, or a power-plant mechanic, or the operator of a motor truck, in all three capacities serving his original automobile factory or shoe factory or textile mill. He is still a factory worker, outside of the factory. He has been shifted within his trade rather than displaced out of his trade. He has not been rendered superfluous.

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Speculation concerning the future of machines and unemployment does not lie within the scope of our inquiry. It may not be amiss, however, to point out that the present trend in technology is not towards machines that are tools but towards machines that are ends in themselves, or objects of satisfaction as we discussed the subject at some length in earlier pages. In other words, the trend is towards inventions that will not displace labor but promise to create opportunities for large-scale employment. We cannot be too certain. Revolutions in factory technique, at present unforeseen, cannot be wholly dismissed. Rapid progress in prefabricated houses would obviously force important readjustments in the construction industry. The cotton-picking machine holds the threat of far-reaching consequences, but not the catastrophic results foreseen in some quarters; and in any event it is still a good many years before the mechanical cotton picker seems likely to reach the commercial stage.

Vast popular interest, on the other hand, attaches to the expansion of radio, television and, chief of all, the commercial possibilities of aviation. It is difficult to see how television can displace existing labor in any appreciable degree, while it is plain that it must create a market for television receiving sets to be compared with the market for radio receiv-

ing and sending machines. Experiments with the wireless transmission of miniature newspapers to the home, if successful commercially, point to a similar ultimate increase in employment.

The airplane has already brought changes in transportation which in their psychological effect may be called revolutionary; but no revolutionary effects in the field of labor are to be expected. Assuming that in the near future people can fly from New York to London in a day, it is not a development connoting labor displacement, but rather the opposite. The giant plane which carries two hundred passengers to London in twenty-four hours will have to compete with the liner which transports three thousand passengers in less than five days. Passenger air traffic on land is fairly competitive with de luxe train service, but the extra-fare train with supplementary Pullman charges accounts for only a small fraction of passenger traffic and passenger revenue. A much more serious threat to the railroad than air traffic at six cents a mile is the bus at one cent a mile.

Passenger traffic, however, is not all of railroad transportation or even the most important part. In the last of the prosperity years, 1929, freight revenue on the railroads was six times passenger revenue, and half a dozen years later freight revenue was nearly eight times passenger revenue. Freight in appreciable quantities cannot imaginably travel by air. Today freight, other than luxury commodities, cannot afford to travel even by fast steamer. The vast bulk of the world's goods on sea moves in twelve-knot ships, with which even the railroad cannot compete. Aviation does not threaten the basic interests of railroad and shipping. The airplane, like radio and television, is not a labor-devouring machine.

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CHAPTER XIII

Automobile Civilization

THE MAJOR ROLE which the automobile has come to play in American life might well have given comfort to one disillusioned philosopher. He is the man who said that the more things change the more they are the same. The automobile has wrought truly remarkable changes in the nation. It has affected industry profoundly, and through industry the entire balance of our economic life. It has made a deep impress on the social scheme—our politics, our manners, and, as many people believe, our morals. Because of the automobile, American earning and spending in the year 1939 differs sharply from earning and spending in 1905 or even in 1915. Because of the automobile our factory towns are different; our cities and suburbs are different; our railroads and interurban transit communications are different; our rural schools are different; our holidays and recreations are different. Revolution is a sadly overworked word in describing social change, but the Automobile Revolution would not be too strong a phrase to describe the changes brought about in America by the motorcar in the space of less than a generation.

And yet the more things American change under the impact of the automobile, the more they remain American. This new machine which has laid hold on the American home, factory, school, shop and forum, and which threatens the very existence of the old America, as so many good people have found reason to fear, proves on closer inspection to be only an affirmation of the old America. The automobile embodies a vigorous restatement of basic national principles. The automobile cannot undermine the old American way of life because it is the product of that way of life and of the spirit that shaped it. It incorporates the aims and impulses that guided our older history. The throb of its engine is the beat

of the historic American tempo. We may go further and say that the automobile is more truly representative of the American spirit than was the stagecoach, despite the fact that the American republic was created by men who traveled in stagecoaches. They went by stagecoach because there were no faster means of travel, but the spirit outran the conveyance. A stagecoach in the Thirteen Colonies in 1770 was not the same thing as a stagecoach anywhere else in the world in that year. The American of 1770 who traveled in a horse-drawn stage on the European pattern was, in a sense, out of his environment. The American in an automobile today is in his appropriate setting.

Food, shelter and clothes still account for all but a small fraction of expenditure in the family budget of the great masses of mankind. Only one of these three basic necessities has retained its primacy in our American automobile civilization. Ten years ago there were in the United States approximately one and a half million retail stores. Of these more than a quarter of a million stores were automobile shops—salesrooms, filling stations, garages. One retail unit in every six catering to the needs of the American people was an automobile establishment of some kind. The value of all retail sales in the country was almost exactly fifty billion dollars, and the sales in the automotive group were a trifle under ten billion dollars, or one dollar in every five. The food sales were about thirty per cent of the entire retail volume. Clothes accounted for less than ten per cent. In other words, the American people spent two dollars on automobiles for every dollar it spent on ready-made clothes. It spent two dollars on automobiles for every three dollars it spent on food. It spent nearly four times as much on automobiles as it did on household equipment, from the stove and pans in the kitchen to the piano in the parlor.

The automobile long ago took its place in the American scheme of life not as a luxury, not as a comfort, but as a necessity. A necessity in political economy is not what people ought to need but what they think they need; and ten years ago the American people thought it needed almost as much money for automobiles as for house rent. The old rhyme said that John Daw, the man of law, gave up his bed and slept on straw, gave up his straw and slept on grass, to buy his wife a looking glass. The American people have not carried the revaluation of values to the extent of sleeping on grass in order to meet the monthly installments on the family car; but beyond question a great many urban Americans have given up their beds to sleep on day couches or on beds built into the walls of the apartment house; they have reduced the old-style dining room to the dimensions of a "dinette" or eliminated it entirely; and the impelling motive and compensation has been chiefly the automobile.

Small apartments do not a prison make, if the tenant, immediately after dinner, can step into his car and go fifty miles an hour on the great motor highways of the nation, anywhere, or nowhere in particular.

The status of the automobile as a basic necessity of life in America was officially recognized in the years of the great business depression, beginning with the year 1932 when government aid for the unemployed began to function on a large scale. The majority of public-relief agencies then ruled that ownership of an automobile did not disqualify a person from receiving public assistance. This was justified on various grounds. With the aid of a car a man might pick up odd jobs in the country districts where distances are too great to be covered on foot. The car itself might earn something for its owner by doing taxi service in places where other forms of transportation were not available. But there were relief agencies which declared outright that to take away an unemployed man's automobile was to strike a blow at his self-respect and to incur the risk of transforming a hurricane victim into a pauper. Either argument, material or psychological, takes it for granted that the motorcar has become an indispensable feature of the American daily routine. It is almost as important a utility as a water supply or sewage system and a more widely prized utility than the telephone or electric light. When the great depression struck we had in the country twenty-six million automobiles against eighteen million telephones and less than twenty-five million consumers of electric light. It was something more than one telephone for every two families, but very nearly an automobile for every family. We had more automobiles than telephones despite the fact that a family's annual telephone bills must be only a fraction of the cost of the humblest automobile, counting original investment and upkeep.

We can go further. The higher cost of the automobile may very well have given it preference over the telephone. That would be in the spirit of the national standard of living. The political slogan of a half a century ago which asserted that a cheap coat makes a cheap man answered to something deep in the American nature. I am as good a man as my neighbor and so I will not put on a cheap coat in order to assume a spurious inferiority. In any event the specifically American character of the automobile becomes apparent if we compare its world-wide dissemination with other modern inventions ministering to the masses. At the beginning of the present decade there were in the world approximately thirty-six million automobiles and thirty-three million telephones. Of these the United States had twenty-six million registered cars but only seventeen million telephones. We had seventy-five per cent of the world's supply of the comparatively expensive machine and toy called automo-

bile. We had only fifty-five per cent of the much cheaper convenience called the telephone. We had in this country one telephone for every foreign telephone. We had three automobiles for every one in the rest of the world.

Possibly it is overstating the case to say that the high cost of the automobile is itself one of the chief reasons for its extraordinary popularity here as against the rest of the world; though no doubt it is one of the reasons. Perhaps it would be nearer the facts to say that the comparative cheapness of the telephone brings it more easily within the public's reach in other countries with smaller resources and lower living standards. That point would seem to be confirmed by a newer and still cheaper invention than the telephone, namely, radio. In the year 1930 we had twelve million radio-equipped homes in this country. About the same time Germany had five million radios. Germany's population being slightly more than half our own, it will be seen that the percentage of radio owners in Germany was very nearly as high as our own. Radio in England was on approximately the same per capita level. England had one radio for every radio in the United States, one telephone for every three in this country and one automobile for every six in this country.

Our automobile superiority over England and Germany does not of course measure the superiority of the American standard of living as a whole. That standard is certainly not five times as high as in England, and it would be absurd to say that in 1930 we were fifteen times as well off as the German people. The automobile ratio reflects our higher standard of living, but obviously distorted by the extraordinary importance which attaches to the automobile within the compass of the American living standard. Every nation will presumably be found to stress a favorite item in its budget. Great Britain's annual drink bill is one and a half times as high as our own, by head of the population, but one would scarcely argue that English well-being is higher than the American standard because Englishmen have so much more to spend on drink. National circumstances and national preferences enter into the final education.

The automobile makes an extraordinary appeal to our national circumstances and the national appetite and temper. We have quoted comparative figures on the automobile, the telephone and the radio in foreign countries and in the United States. Another test would be the comparative prevalence of domestic service here and abroad. Thorstein Veblen's doctrine of Conspicuous Waste will explain in large part the custom by which from the beginning of history the upper classes have surrounded

themselves with retinues of servants. The impoverished aristocrat who dines on dry toast and weak beer but has it served by a butler and two footmen exhibits a fundamental human trait. The chief reason for servants, however, is not ostentation but the desire to escape the monotony and drudgery of housework. In any country which boasts a high standard of living one would expect to find an exceptionally large class of household workers. It is a test which completely breaks down in the American experience. Roughly speaking, one would say that the American standard of living about the year 1930 was a third to a half higher than the English level. We had four times the national income of Great Britain for something less than three times the population. The average industrial American wage was between one and a half times and two times as high as the English wage. Other comparisons would give approximately the same result. Great Britain in 1921 had 1,336,000 domestic servants for a population only one third as large as our own population in 1930. If the same proportion of household workers held for the United States we should have had in 1930 four million of them. Actually we had in that year only two million domestic servants, and that at the crest of prosperity.

It thus appears that the United States has six automobiles for every automobile in Great Britain, relative to the population, but England has two domestic servants for every one in the United States. Our national predilections are for the convenience and luxury of the automobile. English taste prefers immunity from household toil. Great Britain in 1921 had more domestic servants than she had automobiles. We in 1930 had twelve times as many automobiles as we had household workers. We can put the case still more concretely. A poll conducted by a national woman's magazine some time before the crash of 1929 and covering the northeastern part of the country from Maine to the Mississippi brought out the fact that no less than eight out of every ten families owned an automobile, but only one family in ten employed a full-time servant. Scrub-women and laundresses did come into a large number of homes, but there were also a great many homes in which the woman of the house did all of her own work, including the family wash—but there was a car in the garage. In that circumstance is summed up an entire civilization.

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The automobile is democracy. Essentially it is a more democratic invention than the right to vote and hold office. The automobile comes nearer than either of these functions towards the equality of all men by

wiping out the most conspicuous mark of social inequality. The basic class distinction in all history up to our own Automobile Age has been between people who rode on a horse or drove behind horses and people who trudged on foot. The superior man has been the man who enjoyed freedom of movement in space, who commanded a large share of the earth's surface. The inferior man has been the slave, the serf, the man tied to the soil by law or economic circumstances, or, at best, the man whose horizon is limited by the capacity of his own legs. If man is the master of all he surveys the horseman's advantage is obvious. That is why aristocracies have so frequently been called the horsemen, *hippeis* in Greece, Equestrian Order in Rome, cavaliers and caballeros with their chivalry, the Ritter—the riders. The man on a horse looks down on his fellow men on foot; he is in a literal sense their superior. The man on horseback is stronger than the man on foot in a physical encounter. The man on horseback is relieved from the drudgery of walking, and immunity from sweat is one of the earliest class distinctions. The man on horseback savors the pleasure of exercising physical domination; he dominates the animal on whose back he is mounted and who contributes in so many ways to the enhancement of his master's personality.

What the horse in all history has done for the upper classes the automobile today does for the ordinary man. It transforms the clodhopper into a cavalier. It gives him command over time and space. It gives him the exhilaration of speed and the exhilaration of dominating a carrier, in this case a machine; but primarily it is space that counts in the psychological aggregate. The cavalier on his steed possessed a horizon with a radius of forty miles a day. His range would be, in precise figures, an area of five thousand square miles. He has command of an area the size of Connecticut. The man in an automobile now commands a daily radius of four hundred miles. His range covers an area of half a million square miles. He has command over an area equal to the whole region north of the Carolinas and east of the Mississippi River. He may start out from St Louis in a ten-year-old seventy-five-dollar "flivver" and, following his heart's desire, arrive within twenty-four hours in Pittsburgh or Detroit or Minneapolis or Omaha or Vicksburg. A man on horseback in an emergency, by sparing neither himself nor his several mounts, might go from New York to Philadelphia in a day. A man in a modern car, by forced driving, can go from New York to Detroit in a day.

We must think then of the sense of exhilaration, the feeling of independence, the feeling of equality which possess the average man in an average automobile who has the world at his wheels. To the limit of his tires and his gasoline he is monarch of all he surveys. Life has long been

much more mobile in the United States than in Europe. People here are mobile in being born in one place and practicing their trade in another place. Labor is mobile in seeking work and the best wages. Industry is mobile in seeking the most favorable sites for production. Classes are mobile because of the greater frequency and speed with which people rise and fall in the economic scale. For this fluid civilization the automobile is almost the made-to-order symbol.

The automobile is a democratic invention because it is so impartial in distributing its gift of mobility. In the old days the man on his fine horse gave his dust not only to the man trudging on foot, but to the farmer on his creaking wagon, to the parson on his mule and even to the other horseman on his slower steed. But only in exceptional cases does the five-thousand-dollar automobile show its heels or its red light and luggage compartment to the five-hundred-dollar car or even to the one-hundred-dollar secondhand car. Among automobiles there is the distinction of luxurious appointment and gadget, but by the basic test of speed and endurance, there is virtually no difference. The expensive car capable of making seventy-five miles an hour will not often make use of that speed. Its owner will normally be content with fifty miles, and that is a speed not at all beyond the veteran low-priced car in the hands of a good driver. In the normal course of events high-priced cars on American roads are often being overtaken and left behind by cheap cars of ancient origin. It is not usually the high-priced automobiles that carry parties of high-school boys one hundred and fifty miles across state lines to a dance. A low-priced car will bring people three hundred miles to a football game.

More than ever in the United States one man has been rendered as good as another by the automobile. More than any other invention it has served to enhance the sense of power and freedom in the average man. Long ago it was said in behalf of our Machine Age that machines have given to the plain people comforts and pleasures which kings did not know two or three hundred years ago. This is even more true of the automobile. The average American family today has the advantage over Queen Elizabeth in sanitation and electric light and telephone and radio; but while these other machines have made the common man today more comfortable than Queen Elizabeth ever was, they have not lifted him in spirit above the good queen's level. When the average American sits down at the wheel of his average automobile and dominates its modest sixty horsepower and makes it carry him over three hundred miles of distance in ten hours he has in a real sense been lifted above the limitations that bound Queen Elizabeth. He has been endowed with

potentialities and opportunities for good and evil that the great Elizabethans did not know. He belongs, at least by the mechanical test of speed and power, to a superior race.

3

Democracy, however, is only one of the American constants that we find embodied in the automobile. Other constants join with democracy to make the automobile an admirable physical restatement of the American idea. There is the factor of Size, which enters so intimately into the American story. If there are in the United States three fourths of all the motorcars in the world the reason is not wholly our high standard of living. More important is the great extent of the country. If the United States has, in absolute numbers, fifteen times as many automobiles as Great Britain we must also remember that the United States has twelve times as many miles of railroads as Great Britain. The area of the United States is thirty-five times that of Great Britain. Our enormous distances, as measured by the Western European standard, have been challenges to mobility, and the automobile has placed at the disposal of the American people a private vehicle of incomparable potency and range. The railroads in the peak year 1920 carried nearly 1,300,000,000 passengers. The number was down to less than eight hundred million in the year 1928, a year of high prosperity. This loss of half a billion passengers a year was the work of the automobile. The number of railroad passengers went down under the effects of business depression to six hundred million in 1931. That same year the National Forests had thirty-two million visitors of whom nearly thirty million came in their own automobiles.

Here is folk migration on a scale of which the world never conceived even in terms of the railroad. For it should be noted that the average railroad journey per passenger in 1931 was thirty-seven miles. The average distance covered by an automobile tourist visiting the National Parks must be many times thirty-seven miles. The passenger-miles rolled up by this one class of Summer tourists in automobiles might amount to something between one third and one half of all the passenger-miles on all the railroads of the United States in the course of a whole year. This is but one division of a mobile army which in the course of a depression year, 1933, sent three million American automobiles into Canada, and smaller but mighty automobile armies into New England in Summer and into Florida in Winter. Many of the latter are owned and driven by people of moderate means from the North and West, who crowd the less flamboyant sections of Florida.

Still another national constant would seem, on the surface, to be the antithesis of size and distance and restlessness. It is American neighborliness and localism. The historians find the dominant rhythm of American history in this interplay between Federalism and States' Rights, between nationalism and sectionalism, between a great continent and local pride, between the mania for distance and movement on the one hand and the pull of the old home town on the other. It is a tug of war between two forces which many observers, veering with the intellectual fashion of the day, find to be heading now one way and now the other. At the present moment it is the mode to speak of the old local spirit as only a survival, a psychological "lag"—the future belongs to a strongly centralized nation drawn more and more tightly together by railroads and wireless and the centripetal thrust of industry and finance. But the mood often changes, and we discover that beneath the surface drift towards standardization and consolidation and uniformity the old sectionalism and localism are vigorously alive. It is a rhythm implicit in our national history. It is no surprise, therefore, to find that as new forces and agencies enter American life they proceed to line up on both sides of the debate. They lend aid and comfort to both camps.

This is obviously true of the automobile. With its enormous mobility the automobile should be a force for continentalism against localism. It takes people out of their homes and carries them thousands of miles across country—their own country. In the course of a Summer the automobile brings the equivalent of one fourth of the population of the United States on a visit to some national forest or park. It makes nothing of a trip by an elderly couple in California to visit a married daughter in Massachusetts. It permits a fast two-day run in her own car by a Chicago schoolteacher eager to start her Summer vacation in Maine. It carries the Western farmer to his winter of warmth and horseshoe pitching in St Petersburg, Florida. It makes little, as we have seen, of a three-hundred-mile trip to attend a football game. Under such conditions how can localism possibly maintain itself? The whole American people is virtually on the move to see the American world. A homekeeping mentality cannot survive. What can North, South, East, West mean in this new nomadism? What can state pride mean, in these days when the biggest of the states, except Texas, may be traversed by car in a single day?

That is not the whole story. The automobile is not all the time integrator and centralizer. It is not a Hamiltonian instrument for the uprooting of Jeffersonianism. The telephone and telegraph, and before them the United States Post Office, are earlier binding forces in the

nation; but it has been shown that they foster local contacts more rapidly than long-distance communication. It is more and more common for people to speak all the way across the continent over the telephone, but very much greater has been the increase in local telephone conversations; and so with telegrams and with letters in the mail. If modern means of communication have brought the resident of Bangor, Maine, into close touch with the resident of Pensacola, Florida, they have multiplied many times the contacts between Bangor, Maine, and Portland, Maine; between Pensacola and Tampa, both in Florida.

Local and state feeling may be the gainer in the long run because cohesion and organization within the smaller area have been fostered. The motor bus has spelled the doom of the little red schoolhouse by substituting the county educational unit for the old school district. The school bus brings the children every day from an area of perhaps fifty square miles to a modern, graded, highly efficient school. Gone, naturally, is village spirit that went with the little red schoolhouse, but county pride has only been stimulated. Nor is the influence of the automobile on the rural family wholly disruptive. It takes the young people away from home on long pleasure excursions, but it brings together on special occasions the members of a clan scattered over a radius of fifty or a hundred miles. Before the automobile that distance was enough to make visits between parents and married children in the next county, between a married brother and a married sister ten miles away, a rare event.

The integrating function of the automobile has been peculiarly effective in suburban life. Since 1920 the largest growth of population has been in the metropolitan zones or areas consisting of suburban towns dependent on a great city or of the so-called satellite cities. From the rural sections population in normal times has flowed to the big cities; from the big cities it has flowed out again a much shorter distance to the neighboring home areas. The density of population in the satellite areas has increased as the density of population in the original urban centers went down. Manhattan Island, up to the beginning of the century the old city of New York, had half a million fewer people in 1930 than in 1920.

Suburban development has been stimulated by the automobile in obvious ways. It has made the commuter's trip shorter by cutting down the time between home and the railroad station. This means that the automobile has notably increased the area of the residential zone around every station. A five-mile run to or from the train has not been

felt a great hardship, and a distance of two miles from the station is now the equivalent of a five-minute stroll to the station in the days before the automobile.

The routine of life for the suburban housewife has been lightened in many ways, and her isolation from the city greatly modified. Released from dependence on thin train schedules in the middle of the day, the suburban homemaker now finds the city's theater matinees and afternoon concerts easily accessible, and even theater-going at night has ceased to be an utter hardship when an hour's drive after theater will take a person thirty miles out of town.

It is not to be denied that the suburban wife has paid a price for the wider horizons which the automobile opens up for her; but that is only to say that everything must be paid for. Beyond question, America as a whole will in the final account pay a heavy price for the automobile in accentuated nervous tension, in a distortion of life values, in too much time and energy spent on the mechanics of the daily routine. The housewife in the suburbs is an example. The automobile has greatly enlarged the area of her recreations and her cultural activities, but it has multiplied her tasks. It has become necessary for her to add the duties of chauffeur to her former responsibilities. The normal suburban routine finds the wife driving her husband to the station in the morning; driving the children to school soon after; repeating the two trips in the afternoon and evening; driving to the village grocer and the butcher; driving to the outlying farm where cheaper or fresher vegetables and eggs may be had than in the village, often driving to fetch the laundress and to take her home again; in an emergency, driving to collect sundry carpenters, plumbers, gardeners and other inescapable agents in the routine of the suburbs and the open country. Things would be different if we had a way of employing modern machinery to satisfy the simple wants of once upon a time; but desire gains with capacity; demand is fostered by supply; we do things in automobiles that we should never attempt without a car.

4

Much has been written about the automobile as a potent factor in what one school of thought would call the moral revolution and another school, made up of older folk, has sometimes been known to call the decay of morals. The automobile has been accused of contributing to looser sex behavior among the young by providing them with temptations and opportunities hitherto unknown. High-school boys and girls go on journeys of hundreds of miles to attend dances, football games,

house parties. High-school children run off in cars to dance at the road-houses in surroundings not always innocent. Above all, the closed automobile in itself has provided hitherto unimagined facilities for the petting parties which have enormously multiplied the night population of the Lovers' Lanes of the United States so that our sterner moralists have not hesitated to use the strongest descriptive terms for the automobile as the instrument and locale of sex indulgence. The cheaper kind of novel, before the economic crash of 1929 brought a moral sobering, depicted the new country-club civilization of these prosperous United States in colors strongly resembling the Suetonius pictures of Rome under the Caesars; and in these modern American scenarios of wild drinking and wild laughter, the automobile bulked large. Without the swiftness and privacy of the automobile the wild parties with their interludes and consequences would be scarcely conceivable. Such is the familiar indictment.

Closer examination will show that the moral case against the automobile is by no means proven. The reason why we cannot hold the automobile responsible for any revolution in American morals or decadence in American morals is simple but sufficient. The same transformation in morals or manners or codes of behavior has been observed everywhere in the world. The same new freedom in speech and conduct, the same new clothes, the same new drinking and smoking for women, are to be found in Japan, where there are virtually no automobiles, and in England and in Germany where there are many fewer automobiles than in the United States. If revolution there has been, or decadence if we prefer, it has been primarily the result of forces already operating before the World War but enormously stimulated by that mighty event. Before the outbreak of the war that new moral outlook or code was already manifesting itself in the United States, and even with us the automobile might be said to have been then in its infancy. Tokyo, New York and London all acquired the flapper at about the same time. These capitals have virtually moved on a single front in respect to cigarettes for women, drinking by women, the new frank dress for women, the styles in facial decoration which a generation ago good Americans considered the hallmark of fast women. The morals and manners of a disillusioned postwar world are a better explanation of American postwar behavior than we can find in the American automobile.

Nor is it by any means a story to be told exclusively in terms of moral revolt by a night-club civilization. One consequence of the war everywhere was an enormous growth in sports and the outdoor life. With them came the healthy informalities of sports dress and manners. Germany

after the war had few automobiles in which young people might tour the roadhouses, but the Wandervögel of Germany in those years were a prominent and pleasant sign of the times. Troops of young men and women tramped the countryside, living in the outdoors and largely on their own resources. The drastic frankness of women's beach costumes is world-wide; it is part of a revolution which has made "shorts" the summer playing costume for women. For men, too, the swimming costume has been reduced to a pair of trunks. The young man cutting the grass on the lawn is stripped to the waist. It is the costume in which millions of young men dug trenches in the war.

Any theory which would explain our changing morals in terms of the automobile fails to take note of the historical background. Indeed, we may go so far as to say that of all countries it is the United States which should be least affected by the impact of the automobile on morals. The independent young unmarried woman is an American phenomenon which has long puzzled the Europeans certainly as far back as Henry James's *Daisy Miller*. For that matter even today Europe is not wholly reconciled to our American practice of girls traveling alone, living alone and going about their own business. Nor is postwar Europe used to the simple comradeship between adolescent boys and girls which is the norm in America, which is the basis of our coeducational high schools. These things came long before the automobile.

5

Such is the extraordinary machine and toy in which the native genius so completely expresses itself. In the automobile there speaks out a passion for size, distance and speed, for engineering, for play and, above all, for democracy and fellowship. We have repeatedly used the word "machine" and emphasized the mechanical aspects of the automobile in its appeal to American taste, but machine is not really the word to describe what is essentially a toy, like so many other American machines. The automobile is the most costly, the most elaborate plaything ever devised by man: nowhere can we find an instance of a nation spending so large a share of its earnings on a single form of entertainment. Our outlay on automobiles, as we have seen, amounts to one fifth of the nation's retail expenditures, and this is not less than one seventh of the entire national income. That the automobile has its practical uses we have seen. Certainly the railroads which have suffered so heavily from its competition are not inclined to consider the automobile a plaything. This, nevertheless, the automobile primarily is. We have seen in another

chapter that in the year 1929 of all the horsepower in the nation's engines eighty per cent was stored under the hood of passenger automobiles in private ownership. Three quarters of all the Power in the country was to be found, not in the nation's factories, not in the great power stations, not on its trains and ships, not even in motor trucks and motor buses, but in the family "car," whose primary appeal to twenty million owners is not that of a utility—that is to say, a "machine"—but that of a comfort and recreation and luxury: that is to say, a toy. Eighty per cent of the mechanical energy stored up in the engines of the country was dedicated primarily to play.

On closer scrutiny this emerges as a stupendous fact. We face a startling discovery about a people whom the outside world has been unanimous in describing as fiercely practical and materialistic and absorbed in money-grubbing, and pitifully deficient in the art of leisure and recreation. This nation, we now find, actually spends an enormous part of its resources and time and thought on a plaything. To be sure it is a mechanical plaything. The automobile does not rank with the nobler interests of man's leisure—with the arts and the major intellectual exercises that enrich life. If we wish to be severe we may say that the American people's absorption in its fascinating mechanical toy, the automobile, is only a case of the infant under the spell of his new toy railroad, his new mechanical steamboat. But this very picture of the American people in the grip of a children's game obviously nullifies that other older tradition of an America given over to the chase of the dollar. We have instead a picture of the American people squatting on the nursery floor for an unconscionable number of hours every day operating its toy automobiles. The toy is actually a 120-h.p. automobile. The nursery floor is actually more than three million square miles in extent. That does not do away with the fact that we do have a whole nation absorbed in play, clapping its hands and crowing with delight. It is not the picture of a people grinding and grubbing for money.

Grossly misrepresented as a machine, though it is actually a toy, the automobile when further considered disposes of another myth about the American civilization as part of our whole modern industrial civilization. That myth concerns the cheap and shoddy character of the products of machine industry. Admirers of the age of craftsmanship—when people, supposedly, made goods for use and not for profit—have never tired of contrasting those honest products of the handcraft era, built or sewn or hammered or nailed to last forever, with the cheap output of our modern factories, designed to fall apart as soon as possible in order that the public may be compelled to buy more and more, for the

enhancement of the manufacturer's profits. America, as the most advanced nation in industry, as the country where the machine has most effectively dominated life, would presumably be the outstanding horrible example of our shoddy industrial civilization.

It is a thesis which may be attacked from both flanks. In recent years we have had a cool scrutiny brought to bear on the flawless artistry and ruggedly honest workmanship of the early craftsmen. Gustavus Myers in *America Strikes Back* has shown how much poor work and dishonest work was turned out in the pre-industrial age. A vast body of sumptuary legislation in England, Germany and France, from the Middle Ages on, endeavored to combat fraud and misrepresentation in the weaver's trade, the tanner's trade, the various trades of the smiths; let alone mercantile pursuits of all types. It is enough merely to touch upon this remoter aspect of the question. We shall do much better to take the automobile as the most outstanding and characteristic of modern industrial products, and to note how completely it gives the lie to the familiar charges against our modern industrial ugliness and shoddiness.

The shoddy naturally comes first. The tradition insists that an automobile, like any other modern manufactured commodity, is designed by its makers to fall apart as soon as prudently may be, in order that the manufacturer may sell more automobiles. The truth is, of course, that in the automobile our modern industry and especially American industry has created as honest, as durable, a product as the mind can well conceive. Considering the tremendous stresses and strains to which the automobile is subjected, it is a fine and honest workmanship that has millions of automobiles running on our roads after ten years' use and more. Automobiles twenty years old are known to be in operation. It is not a rare experience to encounter on the road a veritable scarecrow on wheels, rusted, mildewed, scabrous, coughing, groaning, clanking, but still doing its thirty miles an hour. The "automobile" which the high-school boy will purchase for twenty-five dollars, which he will recondition at a corresponding outlay, and which he will then proceed to operate on incredible transcontinental journeys—this machine should be a sufficient answer to all talk of cheap and shoddy modern goods. It may be admitted that a farmer's hay wagon of the good old craftsman days would outlast an automobile several times. But there can be no comparison between the slow life-rhythm of the peasant's cart and this new thunderbolt of speed and power. The automobile lives boldly and dangerously like an aristocrat, and we should expect it to wear out as fast. Actually it became a problem in the depression years after 1929 that the automobile did not wear out fast enough. Hundreds of

thousands of men in automobile and steel factories were idle because the automobiles which they had built in former years were good enough, in an emergency, to go on doing their duty indefinitely. People clamored for laws to rule off the road all automobiles more than seven years old, on the legal fiction that they were a menace to life. The proposal failed, of course; but it is significant that the problem of obsolescence did get itself discussed. Industry was producing goods which simply would not wear out and so must be outlawed on other grounds.

Only one more point need be cited to emphasize the essential American nature of the automobile. At the depth of the depression, in 1932, people anxiously scanned the horizon for a new invention, a new industry, to lead us out of the wilderness—to do for 1933 technology and economics what the original automobile had done twenty-five years earlier. No such new industry appeared. When recovery began to run full tide the leader who showed the way was the automobile industry.

6

For statistical purposes it is an exaggeration to say, as the automobile trade is in the habit of doing, that the motor-vehicle industry gives work, directly or indirectly, to more than 4,500,000 persons. Of this vast army the greater part by far is only indirectly employed or partially employed. The automobile gives only part employment to the steel worker, though it is quite true that in the depth of the depression, when the railroads ceased to buy for construction or equipment, and building construction was at a standstill, the automobile was the chief purchaser of such steel and iron as was sold. The automobile gives only part-time employment to the rural storekeeper who has added a gas pump to his line of groceries and household goods.

When all deductions have been made, however, it is still true that the automobile industry is the nation's largest single industry after food and clothing. In the year 1929 the retail value of all manufactured food products was about twelve million dollars. The value of all textiles and clothing was about eleven billion dollars. The value of all automobiles and accessory products—tires, gasoline and spare parts—was about nine million dollars. In that year the value of the output in the iron and steel industry, exclusive of machinery, was something over four billion dollars. In that year the automobile factories, tire factories and gasoline refineries had more than six hundred thousand wage earners, and to these we may legitimately add several hundred thousand full-time workers in garages and filling stations. Two years later, in the first hard

year of business depression, the American people had cut down its food expenditure by one third, its textile expenditure by more than one third, and its automobile expenditure by one half. Even that ratio of contraction meant that the American people slashed as many dollars out of its clothing bill as it did of its automobile budget, about four billion dollars in each case.

The statement that the automobile industry employs four and a half million workers is statistically inaccurate, but it is socially correct. The owner of the little crossroads store who also operates a gas pump is not a full-time automobile employee, like the steel worker or railroad employee; but even a part-time employee in the automobile field is motor-conscious. The automobile may not give full employment to four and a half million people, but it touches on their economic life in some degree. In this sense the automobile is more pervasive than the railroad because it affects, to some extent, the interests of more than twice as many persons as there were railroad workers in 1929.

Not the least striking feature of this giant newcomer in our industrial life is that it is a popular industry. In this respect the automobile stands in sharp contrast to other basic industries. The American people has consistently maintained a suspicious and often a hostile attitude to such Interests as railroads, mines, oil, steel, the food industry, the banking profession. The feuds between farmers and railroads are almost as old as the railroads themselves. The history of the oil industry during the earlier John D. Rockefeller phase is the best-known example of popular resentment and distrust of the methods of Big Business. The bitter coal strikes that marked the first decade of the present century and brought forward Theodore Roosevelt as pacificator gave prominence to the Coal Baron. About the same time came a popular uprising against the Chicago meat packers as reflected in Upton Sinclair's sensational novel, *The Jungle*. The methods employed by the elder J. P. Morgan in organizing the United States Steel Corporation at the turn of the century have remained a theme for caustic comment to the present day. It is a noteworthy fact that we have had railroad kings, oil kings, coal barons, beef barons, steel barons, down to the utility barons and aluminum kings in our own day—all these titles being employed in a hostile and derogatory sense—but no one speaks of Mr Ford as an automobile king, except now and then in a jocular and friendly tone. Of automobile barons we have never heard. No one has ever included among the Interests the Automobile Interest, or, in denouncing the wicked corporations, has included automobile corporations of such very impressive dimensions as General Motors. Anticorporation and antimonopoly doctrine came to the

fore in the second Roosevelt administration, but despite the hard-fought battles over labor unions in the automobile industry, the big motor companies did not take their place with the older wicked corporations in the public mind.

Henry Ford amassed riches comparable with John D. Rockefeller's, but popular feeling about these two men is different even today, when the record of magnificent Rockefeller charities over more than a generation has done so much, with the aid of fleeting Time, to dim the earlier record of Standard Oil. The group of Du Pont interests today are as impressive as the Morgan "empire" of a generation ago, but it is chiefly in the political skirmishing between the Roosevelt wing and the conservative wing of the Democratic party that the Du Ponts came under fire. The Du Ponts as munition manufacturers have been criticized, but as a power in General Motors they have rarely come in for public dispraise.

The reader can no doubt think of more than one reason for this friendly attitude of the American people to the latest of its industrial giants. Since the time of our older Big Businesses there has been a change in the ethical climate of business. Political rhetoric speaks of the era before 1929 as one of cutthroat competition and laissez-faire cannibalism; yet the outstanding event in the economic history of the two decades before 1929 was the rise of an automobile industry singularly free from the excesses of the older competitive spirit. There is nothing in automobile history to put by the side of the railroad annals of the Gilded Age, the story of Standard Oil, of Coal, of Steel, of the Chicago meat packers. Theodore Roosevelt held that there were good corporations and bad corporations, but in the automobile field there are apparently no wicked corporations. Yet the whole answer cannot be a different age and healthier moral climate. The utilities industry is young, but the light and power companies are regarded by the public with very much the same feelings—for very much the same reasons—today as were the Interests of a generation ago.

One reason why the automobile industry has escaped the public odium which at one time or another befell nearly all our big industries is to be found in the fact that the automobile has not yet established itself in our thinking as a basic human necessity. Actually the motor-car, as we have seen, has become a necessity in our scheme of life; but emotions have lagged behind practice. The automobile is not as basic as the railroad, without which the farmer could not live, or coal, or meat, or steel—that is to say, food and shelter, the primary human needs. The utility of the automobile is very great, but even today life is conceivable without it, as it is not conceivable without these other goods and services.

Today petroleum is the fuel which drives automobiles, and a jump in the price of gasoline may elicit a certain amount of public grumbling; but it is not the same grievance that it was sixty years ago when petroleum was the fuel for the kerosene lamps and the oil-stoves of the American people. That is why the utility companies are unpopular, wholly aside from their reputation with the investing public. Gas light and electric light are basic necessities. Streetcars are a basic necessity. The telephone is on the way to become a basic necessity. The automobile is not quite that. We have seen that ownership of an automobile is in many places no disqualification for public relief; but we are not yet ready to accuse the motor manufacturer of battenning on the poor car owner as in the case of Interests controlling the people's food and shelter.

The automobile industry has grown without special privilege or Government largesse. It monopolizes no right of way like a railroad. It asks for no subsidy, as the steel industry has lived on tariff protection. It has not suborned legislatures or bought up boards of aldermen. It has made its way on its own merits.

This is not to overlook the fact that the automobile has been lucky. A combination of happy circumstances in time and in its own character as a commodity made self-interest harmonize with civilized behavior. The automobile manufacturers have been good because something in the very nature of their business taught them to be enlightened. Henry Ford's pioneer five-dollar daily wage no doubt brought him great popularity by which the industry as a whole benefited; but the fact was even as Mr Ford stated it when he claimed no special merit for the innovation and called it only good business. It was indeed good business, and one might almost speak of a mystical quality in the automobile which taught its pioneers to see more wisely than the business pioneers of an earlier generation. The automobile was lucky in making its appearance on the scene about the time when the philosophy of high wages as a basis for wider purchasing power began to make its way. It was even more fortunate in being born into an age of rapidly advancing technology and mass production and low prices. Far greater popularity accrued to Henry Ford because he gave the public a good automobile for five hundred dollars than because of the five dollars a day which he paid to his workmen. The chief reason why the American people regards the automobile makers with good will is that in half a generation the cost of an automobile was brought down from thousands of dollars to hundreds of dollars. Enlightened self-interest plus lively competition brought it about that automobile manufacturers were content with a profit of twenty dollars a car when they might have asked for a much

larger profit and still sold a great many cars. It is not the type of competition to which the adjective cutthroat can be applied.

The automobile has been lucky. It attained its enormous growth at unexampled speed, but without incurring the diseases of overdevelopment. Its career has not been marked by cannibalistic practices, by unsavory stock deals, by the corruption of politics. It has just growned like Topsy, but has turned out a vastly bigger success than Topsy would be regarded by the average observer.

The whole story of our motorized democratic civilization is summed up in the adventure of the one-eyed Negro driver and his five-dollar automobile. In the early part of January 1937, he was charged in the Homicide Court of New York City with responsibility for the death of an aged pedestrian. The fatal accident occurred while the automobile was being tried out. Its driver, a good American, had bought it on the installment plan. He had paid three dollars down, and was to pay the remaining two dollars if the car proved to be as good as warranted.

It illustrates the lawless phase of our democracy that a man with defective eyesight should be let loose on the highways with a lethal weapon in the form of a five-dollar automobile. It illustrates the amazing egalitarianism of our democracy that for five dollars a man may become the owner of an automobile that will actually go fast enough to get into trouble. For the sum of a day's wages a man may become the equal, and perhaps the pacemaker, of the rich man in his expensive car. A peddler's load of vegetables on an ancient Model T will dispute the roadway with the banker's limousine.

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CHAPTER XIV

Farmers

CHINESE FARMERS in Manchuria or Japanese farmers at home spend sixty per cent of the family income on food, and in old China the proportion is even higher. American families in the year 1929 spent thirty-two per cent of their income on food, and millions of families spent less than twenty per cent. In these figures many observers would find the story of the farmer's plight today. The farmer is the victim of Engle's Law in economics which states that as family income goes up a smaller part of it is expended on food and a larger share on housing and clothes, then on comforts, then on the luxuries. As a nation rises in the scale of living its share of expenditure on food will go down. The American people about the year 1890 spent an average of forty-one per cent of its income on food. Forty years later it was down, as we have seen, to thirty-two per cent.

The American farmer, then, would be the victim of a state of increased well-being. He might be described by pessimists as engaged in an obsolescent occupation. He is not quite in the position of the buggy manufacturer about the year 1910 or the manufacturer of kerosene lamps today. The pessimist will admit that we shall probably never learn to get along without food altogether, but the food grower must reconcile himself to a shrinking market.

We face the menace of too much food in the world. It is true that, under the sting of mass unemployment and a volume of distress far from negligible, people will demand angrily why hunger should be permitted to stalk through the land. People speak of bursting granaries or wheat actually left to rot in the fields while men starve in the cities. But there is no mass starvation, or even widespread starvation, or even starvation

in anything like the traditional sense of the word. At the depth of the depression in 1932 wages and salaries were down to sixty per cent of the year 1929. Since the cost of living in that year was down to eighty per cent, it means that even in 1932 the American workers retained three quarters of their 1929 purchasing power, and food takes only one third of the nation's purchasing power. Actually it has been shown that with possibly twelve million persons out of work in 1932 the wages at the disposal of the American people in that year could command a standard of living well above the normal level of the year 1910, when starvation was not a problem in the United States.

Good news for the whole American people would thus be bad news for the American farmer. If the problem of underfeeding failed to attain serious dimensions in the greatest of business depressions it would seem conclusive that the saturation point in the food-grower's market has been reached. The farmer must reckon with a static demand, whereas no limit can be set to human wants in other fields. The student of family budgets has separate columns on his chart for food, clothing, housing, furniture, fuel and light, and Miscellaneous; and the American people as a whole is not far from the point where the expenditure on Miscellaneous equals the outlay on food. We live in a time when Sundries almost equal Subsistence in importance. In the new economic scheme it is obvious that, in the language of international politics, an alliance of the second-rate powers such as shelter, clothes, fuel, furniture and Miscellaneous will set the tune to which Subsistence, that is to say the farmer, will have to adapt himself.

And as a matter of fact, in the long tale of years, the farmer has been adapting himself. The farmer's first response to the lowered demand for food growers has been to give up farming. We think of the historic drift from farm to town as one of urban lure and are apt to overlook the rural push. The bright lights of the city would not have attracted so many country youths in every country in the last half century if the sphere of opportunity on the farm had not been shrinking. In the fifty years before 1930 one half of all the children born on American farms moved to town. In 1880 seventy-one out of every hundred persons in the country lived in the rural areas, and in 1930 they were forty-four in every hundred. In fifty years the rural population went up from thirty-five to fifty-three million, an increase of eighteen million. The urban population went up from fourteen to sixty-nine million, an increase of fifty-five million. The food-consuming population grew three times as fast as the food-producing population, largely because many million food producers crossed the line to become food consumers. Yet this

seemingly has not been enough. Experts say that there are still too many farmers in the United States, if we are simply thinking of the task of feeding the nation.

2

What has made it possible for less than one quarter of the population of the United States, which is the proportion now living on the farms, to feed itself and the country? The most common answer to our question is Technology. People will hasten to point out that overproduction on the farm is primarily due to the same cause that has brought about unemployment in the industrial life, and this is the Machine. The word is here used in the same inclusive sense as in industry to cover improved methods as well as actual machines, but the lay public does think primarily of machines. City folk are less cognizant of the gains made by the application of science to soils, seasons and climates, to seeds, fertilizers and storage, to the development of new subspecies of cereals. It is a whole school of wisdom which antedates farm machines and to which must be credited a large part of earth's higher yield. But everyone in the cities knows about machines on the farm, beginning with Eli Whitney's cotton gin and McCormick's reaper. Today mechanized farming is a commonplace, and the mammoth farm has properly been renamed in Soviet Russia a grain factory. The substitution of tractors for animal power on the farm has eliminated millions of horses and mules and thrown out of cultivation tens of millions of acres in hay and feed. Few magazine articles on the farm problem are without photographs showing the grain fields running flat to the horizon and giant beetles, singly or in groups, scattered over the surface. The beetles are machines.

And yet when all is said and done it is a matter of common knowledge that technology has played a far less important part in agriculture than in industry. The results obtained by modern farm machinery are impressive, but the advantage of the machine against human muscle on the farm obviously falls far below the effectiveness of the power-driven machine against the hand worker in the industrial arts. Machines have increased factory output anywhere between thirty and sixty times in the course of the last hundred years. Machines have multiplied agricultural efficiency perhaps three or four times.

We have, then, the anomaly that the farmer has been, by comparison, little affected by the two main elements in overproduction, and yet he is harder hit by overproduction than the industrial worker. His occupation has been least speeded up by the machines and his labor supply has

been steadily depleted by the flow of farm population to the cities. Nevertheless his trade is an overcrowded trade.

The fact is that there have always been too many farmers. Possibly there are not too many farmers in Egypt where the Nile and the sun permit two or even three crops a year, and it may be that there are not too many farmers today wherever there is employment for the farmer all the year round. Yet one suspects that even ancient Egypt may have had its surplus agricultural labor and the Pharaohs who built the Pyramids were not exclusively influenced by superstition and vanity. It may be that the army of a hundred thousand men which is supposed to have labored for twenty years on a tomb for King Cheops was in part superfluous farm labor engaged on public works. There are too many farmers in India today according to Mahatma Gandhi, who gave this as one of the chief reasons for his spinning-wheel campaign. Half the year the Hindu villager sits idle in his hut, when he might as well be making cloth to fill in his time and cover his nakedness. One reason cited by the Soviet regime for its feverish industrialization programs was the presence of scores of millions of peasants in the villages who were not needed to produce the country's food. It was a state of things recognized under the Czars when the problem was met in part by the extensive development of village industries. Before the World War it has been estimated that more than half of Russia's supply of manufactured goods came from the village craftsmen.

But always in the discussion of long-time trends we must take care not to be betrayed by special conditions into exaggerating the pace of secular processes. The very formidable set of contemporary special conditions that goes by the name of the depression has affected our thinking in many spheres. The farmer is no exception. In our chapter on industrial workers and machines we have found it necessary to comment at some length on the sense of doom by technology which seized upon our people after 1929. Similarly, the doom of the American farmer was speeded up in the thoughts and fears of a troubled people by the prostrate condition of agriculture after 1929; but it was a time when everything was prostrate. The displacement of labor by new inventions has in it a certain measure of truth. The doctrine assumes formidable proportions in times of business collapse and mass unemployment, but it carries less authority when business improves. The superfluous farmer is a much more real person in times of depressed farm prices than when prices are good. The experts who find that there are too many farmers in the country are likely to vary their emphasis with the rise and fall of farm prices.

We have spoken of the difference between the farmer's static market, based on a normal human limit of three meals a day, and an industrial market in which there is no limit to human appetites and wants. The difference is not quite so sharp as we may be led to imagine. There is room for expansion in the food demands of a nation. In the first place, there is a large section of our people whose food standards can well be raised, even if we are free to dismiss the boggy of starvation. The requirements of those classes which now enjoy an adequate food standard can be lifted as our ideas shift from the solid foods to the more refined and diversified foods. The process has been long under way. Between 1910 and 1930 the population of the country increased one third, but the amount of whole milk sold on the farm more than doubled; the sales of butter fat increased more than three times; poultry nearly doubled, and eggs went up three fourths. Milk, dairy products and poultry have twice the money value of livestock and meat sales. Milk and poultry were not far from three times the value of our cotton crop in 1929, four times in the low year 1932, nearly three times in 1934, a year of higher prices.

An expanding market for food products is not excluded, then, at home or abroad. Once more it should be stated that the story of falling American farm exports after 1930 was not in line with earlier developments in world trade. World-wide business depression enormously stimulated the rise of economic nationalism, and it may be that the free exchange of goods on the world market will never come back in its original volume. In that case, however, the plight of the American farmer must be held to be part of general conditions affecting American economy and not arising from the play of long-time forces in agriculture such as we have been considering. Farm conditions since 1930 must be regarded as an emergency, though a tragically prolonged emergency. Comparing our farm exports in the pre-depression years 1925-29 with the five-year period 1910-14, we find that exports other than cotton and tobacco, in other words, food, rose forty per cent in volume, whereas our foreign cotton sales showed no change. This would imply that a saturation point in the world's demand for our farm products had been reached, not in the domain of food, but in a commodity like cotton where theoretically no limit to human demand exists.

Our farmers in the longer event, therefore, may put hope in a domestic food market expanding qualitatively rather than quantitatively. Something of the same appeal to "style," to refinement beyond simple utility, which is so important a factor in other fields of consumption, may be invoked in behalf of farm commodities. The farmer will profit, in the

second place, if world trade revives and the nations, in part at least, return to the sane principle of producing goods under natural conditions instead of forcing exotic and uneconomical production behind national trade barriers. A third promise of development is in new industrial products like fuel, alcohol and the plastics, or, in a closely allied field, the rise of a large-scale newsprint industry in the South.

Beyond this the farmer must be content to let the oldest of all remedial processes continue. The drift from the farm to town and city will go on. It is a process which in one sense acts as its own automatic brake by increasing the number of consumers of food and of raw farm materials and so tending to make the farm industry more remunerative and attractive. In any event, it is a movement which has been under way ever since there were towns and cities for a farm population to drift to. It is not a process likely to gain acceleration but rather the opposite, as the reservoir of rural population grows smaller.

3

Strictly speaking the problem of the farmer is more political than economic. Agricultural distress takes on a serious character which urban distress does not often attain, at least in the United States. The reason is that the farmer can assert himself much more emphatically than the city worker, man for man. The farmer's cry of distress makes itself heard because of his superior prestige, rooted in ten thousand years of human history. He is the feeder of the nations and the backbone of the nations. Our modes of thought and feeling are, after two hundred years of Industrial Revolution, still overwhelmingly rural. In the second place, the farmer is still, in our thoughts at least, the owner of his home and his production plant. He thus has behind him the twofold authority of antiquity and property.

In any event up to 1933 urban distress failed to exert upon the nation and the Federal Government the direct and far-reaching pressure brought to bear by the unhappy farmer. It may be a debatable question whether the benefits distributed to the farmer after 1933 through the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and other agencies did not represent a greater relative money outlay than the disbursements to the industrial population from public works and other forms of government aid. But all forms of direct public relief would suffer by comparison with the Roosevelt administration's monetary experiments, notably the devaluation of the dollar. Devaluation was specifically undertaken for the purpose of establishing parity between farm prices and

industrial prices. Currency management has been the historic agrarian remedy.

Here again it would be absurd to minimize the volume of agrarian distress in 1932, the burden of debt, the mortgage foreclosures and the loss of homes and means of livelihood. Yet here, too, the picture for the whole nation is not so dark as usually painted. More than half of all the farms in the country were wholly free of mortgage debt in 1932. The farm mortgages amounted to twelve billion dollars. The value of farm property in 1930 was very nearly sixty billion dollars. If we go so far as to say that farm values had shrunk to one half by 1932, it would still be thirty billions of farm property carrying twelve billions of debt. It is a heavy load but not a crushing burden. A mortgage equal to thirty per cent of property value is not regarded as a crushing burden by urban homeowners. It was not only on the farms that mortgages were foreclosed and homes lost; homes were lost by the scores of thousands in the cities. But here again the plight of the urban homeowner before 1933 received its share of attention without making the same impression on the public consciousness or the public conscience as the plight of the farm owner. It is not difficult to think of very practical reasons why the Iowa farmer whose mortgage is foreclosed has a firmer grasp on the sympathy of his Government than the mechanic or white-collar man whose modest home in the outskirts of New York or Philadelphia is sold under the hammer.

The farmer holds a preferred position in our political system. This is due in part to the nature of his trade, in part to the survival of privileges out of the past. In the agricultural states the farming interest, or let us say the farmer vote, dominates with an emphasis unapproached by any single interest or vote in the industrial areas. We have visualized the unfortunate New York or Philadelphia homeowner as a mechanic or a white-collar man. He might easily be a professional man, a small businessman, a big businessman, a civil-service employee, a retired businessman living on his investments. It might be a widow living on the proceeds of an insurance policy. In other words, the city has diverse classes, interests, votes, which inevitably tend to limit the influence of any one group or interest, like the distressed mortgagor group. The city has a great population of nonowners of homes, by necessity or preference. To them the tragedy of the foreclosed home is much less poignant than it is in the farming country where home ownership is the rule. The evicted city householder will no doubt command the sympathy of his congressman, but only to the extent that the homeowner interest can be harmonized with half a dozen other interests and pres-

tures in that urban district. The constituents of an Iowa or North Dakota congressman are, practically speaking, all farmers. There are no rival interests in the district to divert the elected person's attention from the farmer's wrongs. Farm congressmen will be more vocal about the plight of the farmer than his city colleagues will be about their own diversified constituents.

This advantage which accrues to the farmers because they are a compact, homogeneous constituency is reinforced by the privileges which the farmer has retained from the days, not so very long ago, when he was an absolute majority in the nation. Today the farming population is one fourth of the population of the country, but the farmer's numerical representation in the state legislatures and, to a somewhat lesser extent, in Congress, is well above that ratio. Within the several states the legislative apportionment runs strongly against the big urban centers and in favor of the rural areas. This result is sometimes attained by simply keeping the old district lines of fifty years ago or more. In extreme form it is the system obtaining in Connecticut where the city of New Haven with one hundred and seventy thousand people has only two representatives in the lower house of the Legislature, like any other town with more than five thousand inhabitants. Connecticut towns with less than five thousand people have one representative.

No such flagrant discrepancies can obviously occur in the lower house of Congress, but equal state representation in the United States Senate makes Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, Wyoming and Montana, with an average population of less than four hundred thousand, the peers of New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan and Massachusetts with an average population of 7,500,000. It would thus be no accident that in the last generation the United States Senate, formerly the alleged citadel of wealth and privilege, has become the more radical house of Congress. Radicalism in the United States has always been predominantly agrarian and not urban, and in the Senate the farming interest can more easily assert itself by a count of states.

These, then, would be the two practical reasons, one might say the two cynical reasons, why the farmer's troubles loom larger in the public eye—the compactness of the farmer electorate and its hold upon ancient privileges. The latter go beyond heavily favoring the rural areas in legislative representation. That is in itself a tribute to the farmer's prestige. Two hundred years of industrialism in the modern world have only begun to modify the pattern of our thinking and of our emotions as molded by many thousand years of history. The farmer's business is still the basic industry. In the last resort he does feed the cities where

the grass will grow if the farmer perishes. In the cold light of reason there is really no difference between a farmer sold up by his mortgagee and the city laborer evicted from his hired tenement flat for nonpayment of rent. It is in both cases a man rendered homeless. But the farmer has prestige, a strategic political situation and property.

CHAPTER XV

Cities

NEW YORK is in a literal sense the most cosmopolitan city on earth, but it is not cosmopolitan in any true meaning of the word. New York is an example of how the Idea may stamp its own impress on the most heterogeneous material. Out of a highly diversified Pluribus the Idea creates a spiritual Unum.

No other metropolis, not even Paris, can approach the motley ethnic pattern of New York. Three in every ten residents are foreign-born. Four in every ten of the native-born have one or both parents born abroad. Out of something less than seven million inhabitants in 1930 the foreign-born numbered 2,300,000. There were almost four hundred and fifty thousand each from Russia and Italy. There were nearly two hundred and forty thousand natives of Germany and of Poland. The natives of Ireland were nearly two hundred thousand. There were approximately one hundred and thirty thousand Austrians, sixty thousand Hungarians, ninety thousand Scandinavians, nearly twenty-five thousand French, more than twenty-five thousand Greeks, more than thirty-five thousand Czechs. Contingents ranging from five thousand to fifteen thousand were furnished by the Netherlands, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Latvia, Lithuania, Turkey, Finland, Spain. Smaller colonies, ranging from several hundred to a few thousand, came from Albania, Bulgaria, Portugal. The Armenians, Syrians and Palestinians numbered about twelve thousand. We had nearly seven thousand Chinese, some two thousand Japanese, something less than a thousand people from India and perhaps two thousand from other parts of Asia. We had twenty-five hundred people from Africa, a couple of thousand from Australia and several hundred from the Pacific Islands. If to these foreign-born we add

their children born in this country it is quite true that New York has more Irish than Dublin; almost as many Italians as Rome or Milan and more than Naples or Genoa; more Russians than any city after Moscow and Leningrad. It is Cosmopolis on a scale hardly visualized by those who so lightly use the term.

The outer aspect of New York corresponds to the ethnic framework. The languages and dialects heard in the street are legion. The names over its retail shops and factories bespeak a dozen nationalities; and these are the business places in the center of the city or along its main thoroughfares. It goes without saying that in the quarters inhabited by solid racial blocs the language heard on the streets and the names on the shopwindows are predominantly of the vicinage—German, Italian, Yiddish, Spanish. Where the settlements are comparatively new the English language is restricted to the children playing in the street. Their elders speak a European tongue.

The old American dietary has been diluted in New York with strange dishes and stranger names. It is not merely that the advertisements in the daily paper offer one the choice of dining tonight in restaurants described as Armenian, Basque, Chinese, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Japanese, Rumanian, Russian, Spanish and Swedish. The deeper significance is in the menus of the American lunchrooms and drugstore counters. These now include such items as spaghetti, beet soup, tamales, hors d'oeuvres and other translations from the Italian, Russian, Mexican, Scandinavian, with German and French for the older foreign sources.

The diversity of face and form among the people of New York should make it an anthropologist's paradise. Actually the variety of physical type is greater than that of language. Physical traits will persist in the children of the foreign-born who have discarded the ancestral speech, though the physical changes are there, too. Under the influence of climate, diet, housing and exercise the immigrant's body structure shows modifications in his American-born children. They begin to approach the older American type. In a measure, too, it is the Idea that impresses itself on the material. *Mens agitat molem*—the mind lifts the body and helps to reshape the Alpine and Mediterranean cephalic index after the Nordic model. It may well be that American ideas on equality and fraternity and self-reliance and fullness of opportunity for everyone impart a lift to the shoulders and a carriage of the head and a look out of the eyes that register in stature and features and coloring among the younger generations.

More readily than changes in physical structure among the descendants

of the foreign-born it is the mental plasm that reveals the impact of the American environment. That is what was meant at the beginning of this chapter when we said that the cosmopolitanism of New York is more apparent than real. Inevitably the presence of a vast foreign-born element colors the New York landscape, but the old American environment has its way with the new mass of foreign life. The new physical types in the streets of New York are conspicuous, but the transformation of the immigrant soul into the American soul does not leap so directly to the eye; yet it is much the more significant datum. The great number of foreign restaurants on New York streets and of foreign dishes on New York menus shows the older life modified by the new ethnic elements. But the thing that does not stand out prominently, that scarcely, indeed, ever receives attention, is the conversion of millions of the newer Americans to the old American dietary. Spaghetti and hors d'oeuvres are even now something of a lark and an adventure in cosmopolitan New York. The devotion of the children of the foreign-born to steak and apple pie and chocolate pudding and corn bread is a basic phenomenon. The newcomers are as quick in Americanizing themselves to the foods of the country as they are to its clothes and its games and its amusements.

What we say of changing food habits will be true of a more important item in American behavior as illustrated in its chief city. And that is the loss of family discipline among the foreign-born. Crime in the large cities is much higher among the native-born children of the immigrants than among the newcomers themselves. The reasons commonly assigned are, so far as they go, quite sound. The gulf of language arises between the immigrant parents and their American-born children. The young people grow up to be ashamed of their foreign and old-fashioned parents, and that is destructive of authority in the family. The old restraints of religion are in great measure lost. In other words, the historic cleavage between the old and the young generation, even when living in the same physical environment, is many times amplified in the case of the immigrant family by a revolutionary change in environment. The immigrant father and mother, especially if they are no longer young, almost live in a different world from their native children.

And yet if these factors do enter into the problem of crime among the children of the foreign-born they are only contributory factors. They leave out of account the underlying cause. This is the conversion of the newcomers to American ideas on children's rights and family discipline. Obviously the Italian or Slav or Jewish immigrants of the last half century could not have created the traditional American spoiled child

as the peoples of Europe know it. The spoiled American youngster was flourishing long before there was any mass immigration. When the roster of the underworld shows so many Italian and Jewish and Slavic names of the second immigrant generation the basic cause is not the estrangement between immigrant fathers and sons, but the impact of American ideas on the newcomers. At bottom it is not a case of the New York boy and girl growing ashamed of their Yiddish-speaking or Italian-speaking parents, though that circumstance helps. It is rather a case of the immigrant children responding to the native idea. It is in the air about them—that the young are free and independent and on their own. This is an old American idea to which the old native material has become comparatively immune, but which rages among the susceptible children of the newcomers. Our highest homicide rates are not in our big foreign cities but in the old South where traditions are strongest. Long before youth in the big cities began running amuck with their “gats,” Americans were calling the right-hand rear pocket in their trousers the pistol pocket.

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The soul of this city of all races, where seven out of every ten persons are immigrants or of immigrant parentage, is not cosmopolitan but American. The soul of a city population housed in skyscraper apartment houses and office buildings is not essentially different from that of the rest of America. Every country has its version of the common remark that America begins west of the Hudson, that New York lies outside the United States. Whenever it happens that Marion or Topeka or even Pittsburgh and Chicago fail to see eye to eye with New York, in their taste for food or in their newspapers or their amusements, they will attribute to the foreignness of New York what is really due to the size and character of New York. We have to do not with Cosmopolitanism but with Metropolitanism.

Only to mention the towers and pinnacles of the city on the Hudson is to affirm the native American character of the place. The business skyscrapers that lift themselves one hundred stories in the air, the apartment homes and hotels that go up forty stories, the garment factories that rise thirty stories are the expression of American daring and American contempt for limits. The land of boundless possibilities proclaims its character right on the Atlantic threshold in buildings that almost literally accept the slogan of a national faith that the sky's the limit. It was not an alien appetite and urge that in the space of a few

years razed five solid miles of four-story private homes on Park Avenue and West End Avenue and replaced them with fifteen-story apartment houses. Here was a case of ten miles of city skyline—if we count both sides of the street—actually lifted from a level of fifty feet to a level of a hundred and fifty feet by a demoniac energy which was characteristically American. Even more impressive would be the thirty-story structures of the Garment Center in the midtown section of New York. Here the ratio of “foreign” workers would be very nearly one hundred per cent and among the languages spoken in the neighborhood streets the English language does not stand out. Yet it is obvious that in its inmost core the Garment Center of New York is an American phenomenon. Its tenants may talk Yiddish and Italian and in externals subscribe to a way of life that is not native, but at heart the Jewish and Italian garment workers have been Americanized.

This, too, is the case with the foreign-language newspaper as it flourishes in every large center of immigrant population, first of all, naturally, in New York. The language in which such publications are printed may be Yiddish, Italian, Greek, Spanish, Norse or Arabic, and part of the news contents would be addressed to a specialized audience. Yet essentially these are American newspapers in selection and presentation of the news. Translate a Yiddish newspaper or Italian newspaper into English and it will be a popular American newspaper, in matter and display, in its whole approach to its reading public. Well-meaning people have deplored the fact that older generations of the foreign-born read newspapers in their native tongue instead of learning the language of the country and so gaining access to the American press. It would remove such anxieties if people realized the truly American nature of the Yugoslav or Spanish newspaper—the crime news, the Hollywood columns, the columns of advice on love problems and home-dressmaking, the approaching Presidential campaign, and in the advertising columns the new automobiles and radios and refrigerators. Needless to say, something of the specific alien character has impressed itself on the American material and modified it, but it is a blend in which the American ingredients far outweigh the foreign elements.

New York has its imperial towers. It has its recondite places of amusement for the unconventional tastes that are inevitable in a city of seven million people and the richest city on earth. But of the imperial vices, as Rome knew them and as Paris and London know them today, New York is really ignorant. The refinements and monstrosities of self-indulgence and the fly-blown display that are the symptoms of decadence are not to be expected in a city whose throbbing youth belies the very

thought of decline. There was a period of three or four years in the early 1930s when the advertising vocabulary in New York press and magazines had almost for its every other word the word "sophisticated." Almost everything that was offered for sale to the New York public was then sophisticated, from the décolletés and perfumes that promised glamour to the women down to sophisticated rocking-horses and refrigerators for soberer tastes. Cigarettes were sophisticated and egg beaters were sophisticated, even as a few years later nearly everything on the market became streamlined. But the fact that New York could give itself up to the fad of a new word and to the delight of a wickedness is enough to demonstrate the intrinsic naïveté of the place. Beneath the surface Fifth Avenue and Broadway are as far away as may be from the stylized wickedness of Babylon, the stupendous cultivation of the vices in ancient Rome. Broadway at heart is far nearer to Main Street than to the cosmopolitan cities of the ancient and modern world.

And the reason lies, paradoxically, in the very fact of New York's great ethnic armies. Where other cities today and in the ancient world have their foreign colonies, New York, as our figures have shown, has multitudes and populations of foreigners. But cosmopolitanism in a great city does not really consist in the racial texture of its population masses. Cosmopolitanism is the product of a small native dominant class dedicated to pleasure and ranging free all over the world in quest of distraction. A mixture of peoples in Biarritz or Monte Carlo is cosmopolitan because, apart from their motley crowds, Biarritz and Monte Carlo have no meaning and no soul of their own. New York is not cosmopolitan because its many races are animated by the same purpose; they shape their lives by the same technique, and these are the American purpose and the American technique. Paris is a cosmopolitan city because it is a meeting ground of ideas and programs from all over the world. They affect a minority of perhaps half a million people in a city of five millions, but the minority gives the tone to Paris. In the United States minorities do not set the tone. It is the majorities that in the long run have their way. What is more important, there is not in the United States anything but a faint suggestion of the division we find in other countries between the minority, the people who count, and the majority, the crowd. It is the ordinary thing to say that tourists in London or Paris miss the real thing because they come in Summer when everybody is out of town. But somehow one never says of New York in Summer that everybody is out of town. Nearly all the theaters may be closed, the opera gone, the concerts gone, the educational institutions shut down, the fashionable world off on vacation, and with

them several hundred thousand vacationists of the middle and working classes; but New York is still here.

We have just said that it is a comparatively small upper class that gives the cosmopolitan stamp to a city rather than the diverse ethnic make-up of the masses of its population. In the case of New York it might be objected that if there is no ruling class, of course, there is the intellectual class. New York is the publishing capital of the United States and the place of resort if not the actual home of many of its writers. Where the intellectual workers foregather we naturally expect a ferment of new ideas including foreign ideas. If we regard all isms as foreign then by the test of all the new doctrines which question the economic or social or ethical status quo New York unquestionably will appear more foreign than any other American city. But the paradox will be noted that this foreign intellectual coloring has not been imparted to New York by the presence of great masses of the foreign-born and their children but primarily by intellectuals of the older American stock who conduct their operations in New York. In the quarrel between New Deal and Old Deal in the first administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt there was a revival of something of the old anti-foreignism of seventy-five years ago and the Ku Kluxism of the 1920s. It manifested itself chiefly in sneers about the so-called Jewish invasion of Washington under President Roosevelt. Too many Jewish lawyers and intellectuals found employment in the new Federal agencies set up under the New Deal. Too many advisers of Mr Roosevelt's were Jews.

It was inevitable that Franklin D. Roosevelt, coming to the White House after four years as governor of New York and himself a resident of New York City with its enormous Jewish population, should have among his advisers many men of the Jewish faith. But it was not the Jews of New York who made the New Deal either in its philosophy or tactics. The militant advisers of President Roosevelt were non-Jews. Were these "Aryan" radicals, in turn, produced by the Jewish atmosphere of New York? The facts point the other way. We must think of New York as primarily a conservative city fed by progressive streams of thought from the rest of the country. The old Wisconsin tradition of the La Follettes and its liberal university professors in the persons of Richard T. Ely and John R. Commons reaches back into the 1890s. A decade later comes America's Awakening under Theodore Roosevelt with its Tom Johnsons and Golden Rule Joneses in Cleveland and Toledo. These are the true begetters of the progressive weekly, the *New Republic*, founded in New York by Herbert Croly in 1914. The subsequent conversion of the *New Republic* type of mind throughout the United States

from progressivism to radicalism was not effected by Jewish missionaries from New York City. That change among American intellectuals was part of a movement which seized upon the intellectual classes in other countries under the influence of Russian events. Oxford University was much more influential than New York's Jewish East Side in making converts for communism in the United States; it was one more example of England's enormous influence on our intellectual movements, moods and fads which we discuss in another chapter. So when the Oxford Union took a pledge not to fight for King or Country undergraduate pacifism swept our American campuses like wildfire. Anti-militarism, by itself or in the company of anticapitalism, spoke out loudly about this time in the Christian churches as represented in their social-welfare departments. Resolutions against capitalism were adopted by various regional or national religious bodies. It would be hard to trace such action by the Christian churches to Jewish influence in New York.

The partly humorous, partly serious geography which makes the Hudson River the boundary between New York City and the United States belongs to a world-wide and ancient tradition. Every great capital or metropolis has been described as foreign with respect to the hinterland. It is a rare account of the French people that fails to remind us that Paris is not the real France; and this despite the fact that again and again it has been shown that as Paris goes so goes the nation. We are told that London is not the real England, but that Lancashire is the real England, or that the countryside with its rural gentry is the real England. Again this may be true in the normal life, but in times of crisis England has gone as London has gone. The historian who has in him the moralist, and who subscribes consciously or unconsciously to the Spengler doctrine that God made the country and the devil made the cities, will quite sincerely feel, like Tolstoy, that the real Russia is in its dark masses and not in imperial St Petersburg. The soul of the German people is everywhere but in Berlin. It was the view which Aristophanes the moralist held about the feverish civilization of violet-crowned Athens and the simple healthy life of the Attic country folk in their rural demes. It is not on record that people formerly spoke of Boston as lying outside the United States, though in our national history Boston will often be found failing to see eye to eye with the people of the Mississippi Valley. This quip about Boston has begun to be heard only in recent times and with reference to the growth of its Irish population. In other words, it is the foreign look of things that counts more than the essence. New York City, with seventy per cent of its population of foreign stock—

foreign-born or their children—invites a contrast with our thirty per cent of foreign stock in the nation as a whole. The contrast is really much stronger when we think of the newer Continental stocks from Central and Eastern Europe. They constitute perhaps fifteen per cent of the population of the United States and forty per cent of the people of New York City.

And yet there is one vital difference between New York and every other world metropolis. In the case of Paris, London, Berlin, the former St Petersburg, we have to be warned that they are "foreign" to their provinces, for the reason that on the surface the metropolis and interior are alike. In the case of New York we have obviously no need to be warned of its "foreignness." That lies on the face of things. But the great paradox is that London, Paris and Berlin are really different from their provinces despite their sameness in looks, whereas New York is at one with its country despite the obvious difference in looks. London and Paris have imposed themselves on the rest of the country, but New York goes with the rest of the country.

The outstanding paradox about New York is this: New York is the home of the Money Power, the citadel of the corporations, the stronghold of the Interests, the heart and the symbol of what used to be called the conservative East; but from this New York has come the successful national progressive leadership of the last sixty-five years. Seven times since the Civil War has the Democratic party elected its candidate for President, and in every instance the winner came from New York State or its close neighbor New Jersey. They were Tilden in 1876—whom we may regard in this sense as the winning candidate—Grover Cleveland twice, Woodrow Wilson twice, Franklin D. Roosevelt twice. For half a dozen years after 1932, when the political map of the United States looked so uniformly Democratic, it seemed more than ever absurd to speak of a foreign New York.

We strengthen our case if we substitute for the technical term Democratic the wider connotation of Progressive. We then add to the seven Democratic administrations since the Civil War the Republican administration of Theodore Roosevelt. This gives us the remarkable record of a New York State leadership—with the technical exception of Woodrow Wilson of Princeton, New Jersey—for every national forward movement; the cleansing of politics under Tilden and Cleveland, the Jacksonian progressivism of Woodrow Wilson and the two Roosevelts. New York, the citadel of entrenched wealth, has furnished the political leaders—the successful political leaders—who have espoused the cause of the little fellow against Big Business: under Cleveland

against the tariff-protected interests; under Theodore Roosevelt against the corporations; under Wilson for the New Freedom against banker domination; under Franklin D. Roosevelt for the Forgotten Man against the laissez-faire capitalist. To this list of forward-looking and even crusading Presidents whom New York gave to the nation we may properly add the name of two more New York leaders to whom the prize of the Presidency was denied. The younger of the two is, of course, Alfred E. Smith. Events after 1932 obscured in the popular mind the Alfred E. Smith record of the preceding decade. From 1920 to 1930, roughly, he stood forth as the major liberal statesman in the country; and he made of New York State in his four terms as governor a laboratory and nursery of social and political progressivism. Franklin D. Roosevelt grew up in the Alfred E. Smith school, followed him in the governor's chair for two terms, and was succeeded as governor for the next ten years by Herbert Lehman, political disciple of Alfred E. Smith and his friend even in the trying times which began with the Smith-Roosevelt feud in 1930.

For our other progressive New York statesman we must go back thirty years to Charles E. Hughes as the Republican governor for two terms between 1907 and 1910. Of him we need only say that his Public Service Commission for the regulation of corporations and utilities ushered in a system which this country has accepted as its chief democratic contribution in a world of conflicting social philosophies; the doctrine of private initiative under vigilant and stern public control, the Regulated Capitalism which was one of the major traits of the New Deal. The story of Tammany Hall in New York City is not a record of progressivism; but it hardly needs to be stressed that Tammany Hall is a thoroughly American institution, imitated and frequently surpassed in the most American of interior cities. New York's virtues and vices are the prevalent American virtues and vices.

3

New York's white towers rising into a blue sky are a denial of the artist's conventional depiction of Industry. It is true that the artists have begun to suspect the truth about the factories of the new age, but they find it hard to get away from the long-established Pittsburgh formula of serried chimneys and the glare of the blast furnaces lighting up the night. No doubt this picture is still true for much of Pittsburgh today, for Youngstown, Ohio, for Birmingham, Alabama; but it is apt to make us forget that Industry can be housed in a modern city of hanging gar-

dens and shining pinnacles as well as in an inferno of miniature Black Countries. The wheels and cogs and levers that we meet in allegorical friezes of Industry belong to the older, noisier industry of steam and not to the new industry of electric power. Because the electric current which runs the wheels of industry in New York does not belch smoke or pour down soot or light up the heavens with flame at night we seldom realize New York's position as by far the greatest manufacturing center in the country.

The Census Bureau at Washington divides the United States into industrial areas having the principal cities for their nucleus. The six chief industrial zones in the order of their importance are New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Boston and Pittsburgh. In 1929, on the eve of the great crash, the New York industrial area surpassed in number of wage earners and value of product the combined figures for Chicago and Detroit, and it was not very far behind the combined figures for Chicago, Detroit and Pittsburgh. Two thirds of that gigantic activity were concentrated in the city of New York proper. Except on the periphery of Manhattan Island where the great electric power stations are situated the factory chimney is not a very common sight in the metropolis. Yet Manhattan Island alone has more workers and produces more goods than the entire Chicago industrial area. Manhattan, one of the five boroughs in New York City, surpasses the combined industrial production of the whole Detroit area, capital of Automobilia, and Pittsburgh, ancient capital of steel. In big, clean loft buildings that are often indistinguishable from the office buildings in which the white-collar population carries on, New York produces the garments and dress accessories for a nation. New York City pays between one quarter and one third of all Federal income and corporation taxes. This will not be written down to the credit of New York by everybody. It would only bear out the "parasitic" character of the metropolis; the city sucks in the vital juices and wealth of a nation. But whatever one may say about Wall Street, parasitic is not the term for a city with very nearly six hundred thousand factory workers. If to these actual factory workers we add the mechanical trades New York had in 1930 more than a million wage earners in the manual trades. Another half-million workers were domestic servants, laundry operatives and in personal service.

Professor Arthur H. Compton has drawn the contrast between English life and American life under the heading, "Oxford and Chicago." Pro-

fessor Compton takes Chicago for his American type: "Chicago, as the metropolis of the Middle West, represents urban Americanism in its purest form, remote from the foreign influences that enrich life near the borders of the country."

In what sense is Chicago remote from the foreign influences that make themselves felt in the cities of the East? It cannot be the absence of a foreign-born population. That element is virtually as strong in Chicago as in the big cities of the Atlantic border, with the exception of New York. Even as between these two cities the difference in the strength of the foreign stock is not overwhelming. In the last census the white persons of native parentage were in New York 21.7 per cent of the population and in Chicago a trifle under twenty-eight per cent. Of every one thousand white persons the foreign-born or the children of the foreign-born would thus be seven hundred and eighty-three in New York and seven hundred and twenty in Chicago. Obviously it is a difference in foreign coloring matter that cannot justify the usual contrast drawn between Chicago and New York, in which Chicago is America but New York is a foreign city.

The question of foreign and native stock is of even less account when we compare Chicago with Boston. In the latter city the native element constitutes 25.6 per cent of the population. In a crowd of one thousand residents there would be only twenty-three more of the newer blood in Boston than in Chicago; yet we need only mention these two cities to formulate a contrast. The thesis falls entirely by the wayside when we recall Philadelphia. It has a native white population of thirty-eight per cent or nearly one and a half times the Chicago ratio; but how often in the last seventy-five years has Philadelphia been held up as best typifying America? It is by no means an impossible claim, but it is seldom made. San Francisco has almost exactly the same native ratio as Philadelphia and it is much more cosmopolitan. In Los Angeles the native population—whites of native parentage—is almost exactly fifty per cent, nearly twice that in Chicago; but though Los Angeles by way of Hollywood is a very big factor in America people do not go so far as to make it a rival of Chicago.

It may be that Professor Compton's characterization of Chicago as a city remote from the foreign influences that play upon our coast cities means literally what it says. The foreign influence is not the foreigner in the gates but the foreign lands across the seas. They are Europe and Asia. Nine hundred miles away from the Atlantic seaboard Chicago simply lacks awareness of an ocean on which ply ships carrying strange flags and bringing cargoes from lands across the sea. Chicago thinks in

terms of railroads covering the American continent and of an inland empire of fifty million people. Chicago newspapers show this remoteness from foreign interests by the small amount of space they devote to foreign news. Inasmuch as Chicago newspapers minister to a large part of the inland empire, it is plain that the Western metropolis reflects the indifference to foreign affairs and the aversion for foreign entanglements which made antiwar sentiment in the interior so strong after 1914.

To say this is only to say that the physiognomy of all our cities is shaped primarily by native influences. It is determined by a city's geography and history. It is determined by a city's age. The character originally impressed on a city persists long after the ethnic make-up has radically changed. The same Irish immigrant will receive a different stamp if he settles in New York, in Boston, in Philadelphia or in Chicago. It is a commonplace that Boston is now an "Irish" city, and in many of its external aspects life in Boston bears out this statement. Its mayors are of Irish blood. The influences of the Catholic hierarchy is manifest in the censorship over books and plays which is more rigorous in Boston than in any other American city. Yet the Irish population of Boston receives an impress as well as gives. The speech of the Boston car conductor is of a purity that would pass for affectation in any other city. The life of the sons of the Irish and other immigrant strains tends to fall into the pattern set for Boston in the seventeenth century by a Puritan civilization. The immigrant who made his home in Philadelphia fell into the established forms of life there, beginning with the separate one-family house which is Philadelphia's outstanding trait among American cities in the East. The individual Philadelphia home, even if it be a house in a narrow alley, the quiet Philadelphia Sabbath, even if it be violated by many people in the practice, seize upon the newcomer from Europe and reshape him after the local image. Chicago seizes upon much the same human material and imparts hustle and swing where Boston and Philadelphia inculcate the Main Street life, and New York bestows its own peculiar stamp of a commercial metropolis and gateway. The *genius loci* operates powerfully in the cities of the American nation, the special genius in each case having been usually determined from the beginning by the character of the men who founded the city and by its geographical situation.

In general we may say that the younger cities in greater measure will show what we may choose to regard as the characteristic American traits; for America is itself young and among the traits of youth are speed, noise, violence and optimism. Unrest, far from being an imported foreign disease, is native and endemic. It is the restlessness of a pioneer

people, and the nearer we are to frontier conditions the more apt are men to be a law unto themselves in times of stress. The Kearny sand-lot tradition persists in San Francisco and, by extension, all along the Pacific coast. Labor quarrels tend to become more bitter as we move inland from the Atlantic seaboard. At the beginning of the century the I.W.W. movement, precursor of present-day Industrial Unionism, had its strongest following in the West. The campaign for unionization of the maritime workers in our own days has been much more fiercely waged on the Pacific coast. An apparent exception to the general rule would be industrial welfare in the Appalachian region of which Harlan County, Kentucky, in recent years has become the type. Actually we find in these Appalachian coal wars the savage tradition of the mountain feuds blending heavily with modern industrial conflict. Harlan County, instead of being an exception, would only be another example of how the old American pioneer behavior will really explain what we may be tempted to call by the modern name of social unrest.

The difference, then, between Chicago and New York is not primarily one between an uncontaminated American city and one deeply affected by foreign currents of thought and living. It is rather the difference found in every country between the provinces and the metropolis. It may seem odd to say provincial of Chicago, a city of four millions and the capital of an inland empire, but it is a description to which good Chicago patriots will confess when not consciously on the defensive. They will admit that in many of the things that constitute a metropolis—the intellectual life, the fashionable life, the theater, music—Chicago cannot compete with the city on the Hudson. It is true that New York does not dominate the nation's cultural life as London rules the intellectual and cultural life of England; among other reasons New York has only one eighteenth of the population of the United States where London has one fifth the population of Great Britain. Yet in due proportion Chicago and Boston and Los Angeles are the provinces, even as Liverpool, Manchester and Glasgow are the provinces. It is even more emphatically the case in France where a common theme in fiction is the ambitious young man setting forth on the conquest of Paris. It was so in old Russia as depicted in the plays of Anton Chekhov. The inhabitants of Russia's two capital cities as they were under the Czar, Moscow and St Petersburg, felt about the unfortunate inhabitants of the provinces what people in the metropolis have always felt about Main Street; the hunger of the Russian Main Streets for the pleasures and cultural delights of the capitals was in the tradition. For that matter, recalling that under the Czars the actual seat of government was St Petersburg, it is

impressive to find Moscow itself, the ancient center and nucleus of the Russian nation, a victim of the provincial feeling, like Chicago.

The well-established tradition which insists that the real heart of a nation is not in the metropolis but in the provinces usually goes on to describe the metropolis as a center of foreign ideas and the seat of a population which has lost its fine old native virtues. For it is a universal dogma that virtue shall be native but the vices are always imported. In the great cities life is Babylonian. The basic conditions of life for a healthy nation—home, family, industry, sobriety, thrift—are neglected, and people give themselves up to spurious values and the pursuit of an empty and debilitating existence. The institution of marriage falls into decay, the bearing of children comes to an end, and the great city becomes a parasite on the nation. The well-known opinion on this subject held by Jeremiah and Aristophanes and Juvenal are reinforced in part by modern vital statistics for rural and urban areas. Both have been combined in Oswald Spengler's identification of Megalopolis, with its debauched ruling classes and its turbulent proletariat as the chief symptom of a dying civilization.

In one sense, then, would Chicago be more American than is New York; in the sense that Chicago, despite its huge numbers, is in its dinner hour and its amusements and its range of interests nearer to the small town than is New York. Chicago is a place where people are still folks. Chicago has its own opera and symphony orchestra but it stands in that respect nearer to the dozen odd American cities which now have their own symphony orchestras, but are the provinces. American civilization as a whole is much nearer the small-town level than is the civilization of any other great nation, and this makes Chicago even more "native" than it would be in any other country. In the United States the provinces do dominate the national life, whereas in other countries it is only a manner of speaking that Paris is not France and London is not England. Actually Paris is very much France. The people of Paris made the French Revolution and imposed it on the rest of the country. London is a huge fraction of England in population; with modern methods of transportation and communication London covers the tight little island completely with her daily newspapers and is every day drawing things even more closely together with automobile and radio. London is not all of England as Paris is not all of France; but they impose themselves on their respective countries to a degree that New York does not even approach. It is Main Street that puts its stamp on New York.

CHAPTER XVI

The Melting Pot

IN THE EARLY SPRING of 1935 our newspapers gave much space to the career of the distinguished engineer and scientist, Michael Idvorsky Pupin. He came to this country from his native village in what is now Yugoslavia, an untrained peasant lad of fifteen, and he died at an advanced age full of achievements and honors. About the same time the book columns in the newspapers were printing reviews of a novel by a talented young Yugoslav-American writer dealing with the life of his immigrant countrymen in the United States, and plainly showing the influence of current ideas both in the art of fiction and in the whole social outlook.

Fifty years earlier the Slavic ancestor of the contemporary characters in the novel came to America and made his home in the Middle West. One of his three grandsons is a racketeer and bootlegger, one seeks an outlet for his frustrated impulses in driving fast automobiles, one becomes a radical labor leader and meets with a violent end. The traditional emptiness of American life, implicit in the plot, is made explicit in repeated harangues in the course of the story. To the grandsons of the Yugoslav immigrant of half a century ago America is frustration and degradation.

Here obviously is a reply to the American story written into action by Michael Idvorsky Pupin and other immigrants or immigrants' sons of South Slav blood. It makes a pretty question: which legend has become more artificial, more encrusted with humorless routine—the old story that every immigrant lad may become Andrew Carnegie, or the newer formula that it is the fate of the children of the immigrant to be-

come racketeers and gangsters or to fulfill themselves as leaders in the fight against intolerable social conditions in America?

If it must be a choice between the two formulas there can be no question that the success story of the earlier period is much nearer to the facts of the American record. The legend which makes the native-born children of our newer immigrant blood find their average destiny in crime or in despair assumes the dimensions of a slander. We need not take this attitude too seriously because, as we have intimated, there is such a thing as fashions in literature and in social thinking. It may, indeed, be only the swing of the pendulum. In the course of half a century many Americans have been possessed with a lively fear of what the newer immigrants might do to America. Now comes the counter-attack in the form of a harrowing picture of what America has done to her newer immigrants.

It is not our purpose here to deal at great length with the Melting Pot theme, of which the name is by now antiquated though the matter remains vital. It is a subject inherent, and one might say omnipresent, in the entire scheme of the present volume. The story of the last fifty years in the national life is the main theme of our inquiry, and it has been so outstandingly a Melting Pot half century. In the year 1890 our foreign-born population of European origin numbered eight million, and of these less than a million were the newer immigrants from Central, Southern and Eastern Europe. In 1930, half a dozen years after the bars went up against large-scale immigration, the foreign-born from Europe numbered something under thirteen million, and of these the newer immigrants were six and a half million. That is why in our present survey the role of the foreign-born and their descendants in the last fifty years inevitably confronts us on every hand. We shall be taking note of the Melting Pot, in greater or less degree, when we examine the American press, or politics, or business, or automobile civilization. In this chapter we must be content with a brief glance at the melting process in its two phases—what America does to the immigrant and what the immigrant does to America. And inasmuch as we began with a Yugoslav text we may continue on the same general theme. We are not reduced to the necessity of making an intensive study of Slav statistics in this country in order to measure the achievements of the south Slav immigrants in America. But we may take one item in the record of the Central European immigrant for the light it throws on his spiritual life in his new home. It will hold for the south Slav, for his brother the northern Slav or Czechoslovak, for the newcomers from the little Baltic countries, for the Balkans.

We have in mind the immigrant's continued interest in his native country and his share in its historic fortunes. The course of events in Central Europe before the World War was in very considerable measure shaped by influences and funds from America. The history of Central Europe since the World War has continued to feel that influence. Slav national aspirations—Serb, Croat, Pole, Czechoslovak—were financed from the "colonies" in New York, Pittsburgh, Akron, Youngstown, Chicago, Detroit, the mining regions. Thomas Masaryk returned from the United States to become the first president of Czechoslovakia. Men who had been lawyers and doctors and professors in America went back to be president or Cabinet ministers in the smaller Baltic states—Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia. When King Alexander of Yugoslavia was assassinated at Marseilles in 1934, it was charged that his death had been decreed at a meeting of the Croatian opposition league in Pittsburgh. The accusation was denied but not the existence of such a league working for the independence of Croatia.

For a score of nationalities in Central and Southern Europe this is only a repetition of the story of the earlier Irish immigrants in the United States, their passionate interest in the nationalist cause at home, and the money contributed by Irish-Americans to every movement from the early Fenians to President de Valera's Sinn Fein. In the Spring of 1935 the Dublin Government announced the first payment on a loan of six million dollars made by Irish-Americans to the cause of Sinn Fein in 1923. Between the European immigrant and his native land strong ties persisted. The economic bond in the form of a steady flow of money from America to the old folks at home—the American Letter of Irish tradition—continued after the drastic curtailment of immigration in 1924 and our own business depression. Nationalistic sentiment expressed itself among other ways in generous support for political and social liberalization movements in the homeland.

We have been rather a long way in coming to the case of our fictional Yugoslav immigrant and his American-born racketeer and wastrel grandsons. It is plainly impossible to think of the Slav racial stock in America in the years since the outbreak of the World War as a debased or nondescript human material molding itself to a general formula of crime, speed and crude materialism. The thing is inconceivable merely on the non-American record. To participate in a movement for national regeneration and social reconstruction, as the Slavic-Americans did so passionately, is to have lived on a higher plane than racketeering, automobile racing and drink. No doubt in American mill towns and mining towns manned by the peasants from Central and Southern

Europe the landscape is not one of unchecked sunshine. We find poverty, brutalizing labor, hard drinking as a form of escape, surrender to the cruder ideals of success. But poverty was not so general or so crushing as in the pessimist version, the hard work was not so brutalizing, the drinking and gangsterism were not so universal, the life was not so drab, the outlook not so hopeless. It makes quite a different picture to think of the Slav mill worker in Pittsburgh or Youngstown taking part in the remaking of European frontiers, giving audience to political missionaries and money collectors from the homeland and pondering the news from home. To share in such experiences is to have risen well above the brute level.

There is available, of course, more direct evidence. We can get data of various kinds on the progress of the Slav immigrant peoples in the course of half a century. Their share in political life is measured by the emergence of Slavic names in the candidates for political office. There are statistics about Slavic businessmen, bankers, doctors, lawyers, editors, teachers, artists, newspapers, schools and athletic, social and musical societies. Such information, to be sure, is not always a matter of common knowledge though readily accessible. But there is one measuring rod for the social progress of our new racial elements with which everyone is familiar. It consists in the new names on the college athletic teams. It is not too fanciful to say that against the familiar gloomy picture of what America does to the children of the immigrant from Central Europe the average American has a corrective in the football news. It is a good many years since the Hogans and the Kellys began to stand out at New Haven and Cambridge among the Whitneys and Saltonstalls on the crews and teams. After the World War it was the turn of the sons of the new immigration. When Holy Cross College played Brown University on November 17, 1934, four of the men on the Holy Cross eleven were Luciano, Marabdos, Monciwicz, Kuziora. On the Brown eleven there were names like Fraad, Capasso, Ostergaard, Karaban. That same day Catholic University at Washington sent out on the field Karpowich, Anthonowage, Yanchulis, Lajousky, Dranganis and Gladeck. That same day Carnegie Institute of Technology used Tabovich, Mihon and Terebus against a Duquesne University line which included Chapala, Rado, Malkovich, Kakasic, Cutorna and Zanienski. That same day Purdue University had Skorrnski against Fordham's Lubimowicz, Sabo, Pala, Sarousky. A week later Columbia University defeated Syracuse University with the aid of Richavich, Coviello, Ciampa, Wurz, Hudasky and Brominski. The up-State team had Minsavage, Steen, Junto, Vavra, Wamsach and Albanese. Notre Dame's blue-ribbon

football team has been since time immemorial, in the language of the sports writers, the Big Irish Team. On November 24, 1934, the fighting Irish eleven from Notre Dame in the game with Army brought into the battle array such fine old Celtic names as Schiralli, Michuta, Viaro, Bonar, Melinkowich and Elser.

This impressive ethnic change in the aspect of American college athletics since the World War in time ceased to be a matter of amused comment and became a commonplace. A cynical explanation is available. There are so many South Slav, Polish, Hungarian and Greek names on the big football teams because the football coaches go out into the mining regions and hire husky young coal diggers, truck drivers and ice peddlers to come to college and play football. No doubt this practice has flourished in sufficient degree to raise the problem of commercialized football. Yet it is absurd to suppose that the hiring of professional football gladiators could be really conducted on such a large scale. We get nearer to the facts when we assume that the recruiting of athletic material does go on extensively. The high schools are combed for football talent, and alumni subsidies do the rest. But this can only mean that the sons of the Central European immigrants, the children of the Slav miners and steel workers are already in the high schools. In a single decade between 1920 and 1930 the students in our high schools increased from two million to four and a half million and the college attendance went up from less than four hundred thousand to nearly a million. Among the new students were many sons and daughters of the new immigration. The heavy Slavic tinge on our football teams, the impressive Italian contribution to professional baseball, are evidence directly bearing on actual conditions among the newer immigrant stocks whom postwar literature and ideology have chosen to portray on a level ranging from depressed to submerged.

In 1930 the country had roughly thirteen million white persons born in Europe. With their American-born offspring they constituted a population of thirty-five million Americans of what is technically called the foreign stock. Another three million were of Canadian origin. The aggregate would constitute something over one third of our entire white population. Of every four white native Americans three were the children of native parents and one had a foreign-born father or mother or both.

Of the thirty-five million Americans of foreign stock—immigrants and their native offspring—about nineteen million belong to the older blood strains from Western and Northern Europe and sixteen million to the newer stocks from Central, Southern and Eastern Europe. In the older

category the three main sources of supply have been the United Kingdom with seven and a half million persons, Germany with seven million and the Scandinavian countries with three and a half million. Of the newer stocks Italy accounts for something between four and five million; Poland, three and a half million; Russia, something less than three million, and Czechoslovakia a million and a half.

Generalizations of wide sweep have been based on the change in the racial character of our immigration beginning about the year 1880. That the ethnic changes have brought or seem likely to bring problems of a wholly different nature from the earlier history of American immigration has been questioned in the preceding pages. Writing in 1933, Thomas J. Woofter, author of *Races and Ethnic Groups in American Life*, sums up a continuing tradition that goes back a hundred years to the beginnings of mass immigration and, beyond that point, to the origins of America. In 1933 the upward thrust of successive ethnic and social layers of the population was still in operation. Mr Woofter notes that by the outbreak of the World War many of the immigrants who had monopolized the rough jobs in industry which the native-born would not touch had themselves moved up into the semiskilled, skilled and white-collar jobs. Their place in large measure was taken by the Negro migrants from the South, who pushed their predecessors up in the social scale as these in their turn had lifted the native-born ahead of them:

Still more recently the Mexicans, who for a long time were a vital part of the construction and maintenance labor force on the railways, have been drawn into heavy industry because the abler Negroes are beginning to rise into the skilled and semi-skilled professions. As this is a cycle through which the older immigrants have passed, through which the Negro is passing and in which a few Mexicans are beginning, we shall not describe the trend for each of them in detail.

The road traversed by each group in its upward progress is obviously beset with difficulties; and that was the phase most heavily stressed in the depression mood of the country, notably by President Roosevelt himself. The more realistic view, which is also the more cheerful view, is presented by Mr Woofter:

It would be possible to paint a gloomy picture. On the other hand, if attention is focussed on the progress actually made by most groups it is apparent that industry is able eventually to fit many members of all groups into higher positions of skill.

This upward thrust of successive foreign layers of the population and of the Negro is reflected in a parallel shift in attitudes. Prejudice against foreign nationalities is largely confined to groups which have recently arrived in large numbers:

In their turn the cold disapproving eye has been trained on newly arrived Germans, Irish, Scandinavians, South and East Europeans. The despised alien of yesterday becomes the 100 per cent American of today and joins the native-born in scorn of freshly arrived nationals.

CHAPTER XVII

Regions and Traits

LIFE IN THE United States is less diversified than in any other country of the Western civilization, but the degree to which we have carried uniformity was greatly overestimated, along with so many other appraisals, in the rebel years between the Armistice and the economic crash of 1929. The fierce light which beat down on American existence in that militant decade fell with special harshness on herd instinct, uniformity, standardization, mechanization, the band-wagon spirit. The satirists were appalled by the sameness of the national life, between Maine and California, between New York City and Peoria, in the matter of horn-rimmed spectacles, ready-made clothes, country clubs, motion-picture palaces, jazz orchestras, breakfast foods, newspaper syndicates, best-selling books. Mechanization and uniformity went hand in hand when the telegraph companies devised standard forms for Mother's Day messages. A plague of Days and Weeks descended upon the nation—Fire Prevention Week, Eat-an-Apple Week, Cellar Cleanup Week, Father's Day, Mother-in-Law's Day. The whole American people seemed to be simultaneously engaged in performing the same ritual, experiencing the same emotions, expressing them in the very same words, responding to the same stimuli from a central source—and usually a commercially motivated source.

It was an exaggerated picture. In the sober and frightened decade of the 1930s people grew aware that the standardization legend had been overdone. It was a fashion. One New York literary critic and well-equipped observer of the American scene published in the Spring of 1934 a little book descriptive of an automobile trip across country in which the old standardization formula was, explicitly or by inference,

sharply revised. In the Summer of 1934 Robert L. Duffus, author and journalist, began a paper in the *New York Times Magazine* by questioning the whole tradition of American uniformity. Mr Duffus asserted that people all over the United States do not even eat the same breakfast foods, thus challenging one of the basic articles in the standardization creed.

Like so many searching adventures in self-criticism, whether by individuals or nations, the revolt against the monotony of American life fell into error by making distorted use of the comparative method. American uniformity and European diversity were both exaggerated. One of the most familiar notes in the older European literature—French, Russian, Nordic—is revolt against the dreadful uniformity of middle-class life. Everywhere there is a yearning to escape from the stagnation of the provinces to the life of the capital—the only life there is. The external sameness of French towns, for instance, surpasses anything that we can show in the United States. A traveler set down in a residential section of Portland, Maine, and Portland, Oregon, will notice a greater difference than if he stood in a residential street in, let us say, Amiens and Bordeaux. The civil and public architecture in France is much more uniform than our own—the little public square with its plane trees, its band stand, its border of cafés. In news pictures of street demonstrations in a European town, the country in which the town is situated may sometimes be identified by the language on a street sign or over a shop. In the absence of such indications there is usually no telling whether the latest Continental sore-spot is a street in Berlin, Paris, Vienna, Rome, Bucharest, Warsaw, Barcelona or Belgrade. To the average observer virtually all European cities are standardized, if one is to judge by the characteristic Continental apartment-house façade with its large casement windows, the mansard roof, the cafés and the newspaper kiosks. But the street-fighting which the newspaper picture chronicles is apt to be a phase of that fierce new Nationalism which reminds us how far from standardized are the European peoples in their specific appetites and ambitions. The diversity of European life is out of all relation to the external appearance of the cities.

This is true of American cities and the people who live in them. By looking and thinking deep down enough we can find an impressive measure of diversity in matters human and vital beneath the enamel finish of standardized clothes, automobiles, newspapers, golf clubs, radio, jazz and college campuses, stretching from the Pacific to the Atlantic and from Canada to the Gulf. The sad-iron of the Machine Age has not ironed out New England, the South, Oklahoma, California, the North-

west. Within the larger sections and regions many of the old vicinages persist. Maine has not been changed by three quarters of a century of city vacationists out of all resemblance to its historic self. The Keystone State has its Pennsylvania Dutch enclave with witch trials and Mennonite rebels against the public-school laws. Northern Ohio despite a vast automobile growth in the last twenty-five years shows the stamp of the old Western Reserve. Indiana is recognizably the Indiana of half a century ago despite Gary steel and automobiles. As we move further west we traverse a region geographically flat and uniform but of a lively variety of temper—Chicago which is admittedly neither New York nor Boston, the middle Northwest of the strong Scandinavian cast, Nebraska whose sharp diversity from the neighboring Kansas shows the influence of a heavy German immigration. And so in the course of time we reach the farthest and newest corner of the American scene in Los Angeles. There, in the confines of a single city, we have the violent life and manners of the mining camp or boom town running parallel with the Middle Western civilization of the retired farmers and with the fantastic civilization of the motion-picture industry. In the new Los Angeles meet the San Francisco of '49, the Iowa of Herbert Hoover and 1928, the Broadway of the moment. There are samples from every part of the country but the whole effect is peculiarly Los Angeles.

Easy acquiescence in the standardization legend is primarily due to the size of the country. The picture is so big that even a large detail fails to stand out. The total sum is so vast that even a large exception is lost. California has admittedly a character of its own. It brims over with personality and eccentricity; but in a country of one hundred and thirty million people and three million square miles an exception like California may be easily forgotten in the heat of argument. Yet a commonwealth of five million inhabitants in a country the size of the United States is like a province with a million people in a country the size of Spain. In the latter case its special character would not be overlooked. California is the equivalent of a province of two hundred and fifty thousand people in a country the size of Sweden. The individuality of the province of Dalecarlia in Sweden is historic. The individuality of California cannot assert itself in the same degree against one hundred and twenty-five million Americans outside of California.

One would say offhand that the months following the Presidential election of 1936 were not a time in which the prestige of New England

stood high in the land. President Roosevelt had just been re-elected by unprecedented popular majorities and the vote of forty-six states. The chill and lonely eminence occupied by Maine and Vermont became the subject of a vast amount of humor. People spoke of the secession of these two states from the Federal Union. To be sure, four other New England States had rallied to Mr Roosevelt but people took it as in the order of things that if anywhere a faint note of discord made itself heard in a tremendous national chorus of approval, the minority voices should emanate from New England.

Early in 1937 the Pulitzer Award for the best book of the previous year dealing with American history was given to *The Flowering of New England* by the distinguished critic and literary historian Van Wyck Brooks. Popular opinion had anticipated the verdict of the Pulitzer jury. The public took to its heart a book which may well be described as a hymn to New England, and in this the public was at one with the professional critics. They were swept off their feet by an evocation of New England that sharply rejected the New England picture which they had strongly defended in the books and plays of the preceding two decades. For that matter, it might be said of the author himself that in *The Flowering of New England* he came back to his father's house. Mr Brooks was a pioneer in the revolt against the prewar Genteel Tradition in American literature. His was the demand for an adult literature suited to an America that had come of age. In the years after the Armistice the country learned to think of New England in terms of Eugene O'Neill's plays, and generally, in terms of the new realistic literature, emphatically non-genteel.

The revolt against the literary Fathers had pretty well spent itself by the time the country reached the depth of the business depression. In a national emergency there would be more serious things to do than continue the exploration of the deeper neuroses of a decadent New England Puritanism. In time of trial serious minds will turn, among other helps, to the past for guidance, for comfort. In any event, Van Wyck Brooks in *The Flowering of New England* came as a reminder that there was virtue in New England. There was virtue not only in rebels like Emerson and Thoreau and minoritarians like Hawthorne, but also in a Whittier, a Lowell, a Holmes and—even in Longfellow. The famous picture panel of bearded New England demigods, which hung in schools and homes long before the World War and which became an object of derision after the war, is now polished up and restored to its place of honor or at least to a place of honor. It is no answer to say that the former insurgent critics have rallied only to the militant strain in these

New England worthies. They have found something of the rebel and come-outer in James Russell Lowell, in the gentle Longfellow. And that is precisely the point. The rebel strain may be found in any group or generation if we look for it. Until the literary tide turned and the fashions began to change about 1930 people refused to look for the hot rebellious New England blood in the Longfellows and the Whittiers, but let them fall under the sweeping verdict of damnation pronounced upon a genteel and hypocritical and repressed New England. In any event that hostile mood has passed. Mr Brooks makes no attempt to separate Emerson and Thoreau and Alcott from the professors and the prigs. All of New England is suffused with the love and admiration which he pours out in his beautiful book—New England's humanity, democracy, love of learning, passion for improvement. In the postwar insurgent literature the emphasis was on the New England cotton mills where men and women were exploited. Mr Brooks recalls a New England where the mill girls organized clubs to read books and study foreign languages.

We find then in *The Flowering of New England* an American trait which we may call regional piety at its best and local patriotism on a lower level. The book affirms the persistence of a regional life force by predicting for New England a future even more dazzling than its highest past; this against the erstwhile prophets of New England spiritual dooms and vanished eras.

3

When President Roosevelt declared, sometime in the middle of his second term, that the South constituted the nation's Number 1 problem it was only the restatement, in modern language and under present-day conditions, of a truth that goes back very nearly to the beginning of our national history. It is set down in all the school books that the South was the nation's chief problem from the year 1820 when the Missouri Compromise opened the great debate that was to attain its tragic climax in the Civil War, with consequences that continue to operate today. Mr Roosevelt was thinking in concrete terms of soil erosion, farm tenancy, low industrial wages, health, housing, illiteracy. He had in mind a backward economic and social status of which we catch a single camera flash in the National Conference Board's estimate that in the year 1925 the per capita income in New York State was \$1,365 and in Mississippi it was \$287. This is the problem of the "differential" that affected all discussion and action on wages and industry under President Roosevelt. It is a differential not only between New York and Mississippi but between

the South and the rest of the country. As late as the year 1936 the wage for picking one hundred pounds of cotton was fifty-five cents in Georgia and one dollar and ten cents in Arizona.

The exceptional status of the South came to bulk larger in President Roosevelt's thoughts and speech as time went on. At the beginning of his tenure of office the sins of the Old Order, as frequently catalogued by the President and his supporters, were on a nation-wide scale. They were such things as a blind laissez-faire economics, cutthroat competition, the exploitation of labor and in particular of women and child workers, unscrupulous financiers, greedy public-service corporations. It was the unrestrained play of the Profit Motive whose ravages marked every section of the country—low wages and depleted purchasing power in the industrial East, the plundered forests of the Northwest, the ravished soil of the Dust Bowl, erosion in the South.

In his second term Mr Roosevelt's emphasis veered more and more to the South, explicitly or by inference. The South was above all other sections the region of the underprivileged. When the President spoke of a nation one third ill fed, ill housed and ill clad he could start with nearly ten million Negroes in the South, reinforced by a large white population living on a depressed economic level. The heaviest evidence against the Old Order in work, wages, health, housing and education was to be found in the South. The case was summed up in President Roosevelt's characterization of the South as the nation's Number 1 problem. In that region, if anywhere, the times called for a new order of things.

But if an enterprise like the Tennessee Valley Authority is the beginning of a new order in the South it is also a return to a tradition much older than the New South which loomed so big a generation ago. That earlier New South was resolved to live no more in memories of the past or on the ideas of the past. It was an industrializing South, with the rise of textiles in the Carolinas, of coal, iron and steel in Alabama and, later in time, oil in Texas. The South embraced the spirit and methods of Northern industry and, in lesser degree, the concomitant Northern way of life. The region sought to capitalize in the time of Theodore Roosevelt the very differentials which President Franklin Roosevelt at best tolerated. The argument of cheap labor and proximity to the sources of raw materials, cotton in the Carolinas, iron ore and coal in northern Alabama, was employed to attract Northern capital. The general record for a generation preceding the business collapse of 1929 shows that industrial progress in the South was accompanied by a lift in the level of well-being as measured in health, schools, housing, though marked no doubt, too, by new problems of urban congestion and other familiar symptoms

of the Industrial Revolution everywhere. If the Tennessee Valley Authority typifies the newest South under Franklin D. Roosevelt we might speak of the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, creator of the "Pittsburgh of the South" in Birmingham, Alabama, as type of the New South around the start of the century.

There is, however, a basic difference between the rise of industry in the New South after the Spanish-American War and the TVA experiment under President Franklin Roosevelt. The earlier process was what it seemed, industrial development. The spirit and aims of the TVA after 1933 were at bottom agrarian. Though great expectations were held out of industrial development based on cheap TVA power, the heavier emphasis was laid on electricity for the farm and the home, on cheap electric current for illumination, heating, cooking and the numerous devices of modern homemaking. TVA, in other words, was not primarily designed to speed up the industrialization of the South but to lift the general level of comfort for an agrarian population. Superpower and Giant Power were familiar words about TVA, but the chief interest was not in the manufacturer and industrial wage earner but in the farmer.

That is why TVA really antedates in spirit the New South of once upon a time. To call TVA a double adventure in government centralization—Federal Government against the states and government enterprise against private enterprise—was proper enough from the standpoint of the dominant national thought up to 1933, from the standpoint, let us say, of the social philosophy which produced the New South of an earlier generation. But centralization, paternalism, Government largesse—in the form of TVA power, of cotton subsidies, of bounties for soil conservation, of Government housing—the philosophy behind these things is by no means alien to Southern experience. They are part of an agrarian tradition which has operated everywhere in the nation. In a future chapter we shall see that the traditional picture of the sturdy and self-reliant pioneer must be seriously modified in light of the generous bounty which the farmer has always received and expected from his government. The region of the TVA experiment was the chief battleground one hundred and twenty-five years ago over the issue of national funds for Internal Improvements, for the roads and canals which opened up the country beyond the Alleghenies. The conflict terminated in full victory for the Western idea of Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson. The funds removed by President Jackson from the United States Bank and distributed among the states helped to finance the boom in canal building which preceded the panic of 1837. Government funds for the public welfare in the form of public works are an old American tradition. In this sense it is appro-

priate that an ambitious Government enterprise like the TVA should be staged in the Tennessee Valley which is Andrew Jackson's valley.

In those states of the Solid South where industrialism and the new spirit made the greatest progress in the generation preceding 1929 there was the least enthusiasm for the policies of the New Deal after 1933. Over the whole South broad fissures had opened up in the surface of Democratic party loyalty by the early months of President Roosevelt's second administration. The issues raised by Mr Roosevelt's proposals for enlarging the Supreme Court found only twelve out of twenty-two Southern Senators standing with the President in the Spring of 1937. Long before that time the sentiment in Virginia, the Carolinas and Texas, as reflected in the Senate and including its presiding officer, the Vice-President of the United States, John N. Garner, was cool to the broad social program and still bolder social ideology fostered by the Roosevelt administration. The outstanding exception would be Alabama, one of the industrial leaders, as we have seen, of the New South of a generation ago. The warmest support, or at least the most consistent support for Mr Roosevelt came from the Deep South, which offhand one would not consider favorable ground for any kind of New Deal. One reason, no doubt, would be the stronger hold of Democratic party loyalty. The pull of party ties was sufficient to hold states like Arkansas, Mississippi and Georgia in line for Alfred E. Smith, the Democratic nominee for President in 1928, but Virginia, North Carolina and Texas were three of the four states of the Solid South that shattered all traditions and confounded all the prophets by giving their votes to the Republican candidate on the religious issue. These more advanced states of the South, economically, showed the greater spirit of independence again under President Roosevelt.

A blind Democratic loyalty is not the only reason for the special favor which Mr Roosevelt's policies encountered in the states of the Deep South. An affirmative factor of great importance was the agrarian nature of the New Deal insofar as it concerned the South—the essential Jacksonian character of the Roosevelt policies beneath a modern industrial terminology. Precisely in the less advanced sections of the South where the industrialism of the preceding thirty years had made least progress the Jacksonian tradition showed the strongest vitality after 1933; not the later adoption of Andrew Jackson as the champion of all the plain people, but Jackson the champion of the plain farming people.

Parallel with the rise of industrialism in the South a generation after the Civil War, there appeared on the political stage a succession of men who in the Middle West would have been called at different times Popu-

lists and Progressives but who in their Southern manifestation were described by conservative opinion as demagogues. They were the spokesmen for the poor white farmers of the South now beginning to assert themselves simultaneously against the older plantation bourgeoisie and the new industrialism. "Pitchfork Ben" Tillman and Cole Blease from South Carolina, Vardaman and Bilbo from Mississippi, Heflin from Alabama, Jeff Davis from Arkansas, brought to the august Senate chamber at Washington the tradition of the rip-roaring, fire-snorting, half-horse and half-alligator Mississippi River man whom the older East regarded as the authentic type of the Jacksonian democracy. The type reached its culmination in the 1930s in the person of Huey Long of Louisiana whose brief but sensational career on a nation-wide stage, revealing touches of the gangster and the mountebank, must not be allowed to obscure the fact that in his native state he led a successful uprising of the submerged "poor-white" element against the old ruling caste. Huey Long, in lighter mood mixing cocktails of his own invention for the reporters behind the bar of a New York hotel, came down in a straight succession from the "mob" which stormed the White House after Jefferson's victory back in 1800 and celebrated its triumph by jumping with rawhide boots on the drawing-room furniture as described with disgust and horror by Henry Adams.

The grandiose TVA project bears the same name as the state which witnessed, less than ten years earlier in the administration of Calvin Coolidge, the famous "Monkey Law" trial in which a schoolteacher was prosecuted for violating the Tennessee statute outlawing the doctrine of evolution. That the coming of TVA signalized a change in the intellectual climate of Tennessee is disproved by the fact that as late as 1935 the Legislature voted down a bill rescinding the antievolution law. Industrialization in Alabama showed itself compatible with a state of mind on the Negro question revealed in the celebrated Scottsboro case. An indignant national public opinion, backed by the action of the United States Supreme Court, had to fight a long battle to prevent a wanton and cruel denial of justice by Alabama courts to Negro citizens. The old Jacksonian democracy, passing over into the democracy of the New Deal, could hardly be said to have suffered a sea-change. Traits of the old Adam survived. It was possible for a United States Senator from Alabama who owed his political advancement to the support of the Ku Klux Klan to become an ardent supporter of President Roosevelt's progressive policies and to be rewarded for his service to the New Deal with a seat on the Supreme Court bench.

4

Third-party movements in the course of the last fifty years have come out of the West, if we except ideological parties like Prohibitionists and Socialists and call Theodore Roosevelt's candidacy in 1912 not a third-party movement but a civil war inside the Republican party. The best display of third-party strength, in an ascending order of importance, was made in 1936 by William Lemke of North Dakota, nominee of the Union party; in 1892 by General James B. Weaver of Iowa, nominee of the People's party; and in 1924 by Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin, nominee of the Progressive party and the Socialist party. The nation's insurgent belt since the turn of the century lies in the middle Northwest and comprises Wisconsin, Minnesota and the two Dakotas. From this region have come the Non-Partisan and Farmer-Labor movements inside one or more of these states and the La Follette and Lemke national candidacies. The power of the La Follette dynasty in Wisconsin dated back to the year 1900 and continued after the founder's death, under one of the La Follette sons as United States Senator and the younger son as three-time governor, until the latter's startling defeat in the nation-wide Republican upswing in 1938. In the Presidential election of 1924 Senator La Follette carried Wisconsin, came within a few thousand votes of carrying Montana, and polled nearly eighty per cent of Calvin Coolidge's vote in the Dakotas, thus demonstrating the regional character of his strength. It is true that he received very nearly five million votes in the nation or sixty per cent of the Democratic vote cast for John W. Davis, but these millions elsewhere were in part Progressive Republican votes surviving from the Theodore Roosevelt campaign of 1912, and in part the fruit of bitter Democratic dissension.

Insurgency in what we may call the Third-Party belt expressed itself in fields other than politics and notably in the progressive atmosphere of the University of Wisconsin. Two eminent scholars in the field of economics, Richard T. Ely from 1892 to 1925, and his associate and successor, John R. Commons, from 1904 to 1933, lent prestige to the university. Professor Ely was among the first American scholars to approach the study of Socialism, long before the turn of the century, in an objective spirit.

We are justified in arguing that the cause of regional insurgency is largely ethnic. The population is predominantly of German or Scandinavian origin. Long ago the Germanism of Milwaukee was a commonplace, and even more so is the Scandinavian monopoly of politics in

Minnesota with its Johnsons and Olsons. In 1930 the German and Norse elements constituted the following percentage of the whole population: Missouri, sixteen per cent; Minnesota, sixty; Wisconsin, fifty; North Dakota, sixty; South Dakota, forty. Missouri is here included with the others because formerly the German character of St Louis was a popular tradition, but actually we see that the Germanic element is much smaller in conservative Missouri than in the Progressive Northern states. In proportion to the total population Wisconsin is three times as Germanic as Missouri, and even the smaller Northern states are at least as heavily Germanic as Missouri.

It would follow from these figures that a certain connection may exist between progressiveness or discontent, as we may choose, and a large foreign stock. This is a sufficiently common belief, but the specific racial character of that foreign element is not at all in accordance with general opinion. The fomenters of political "unrest," as expressing itself in Progressive movements, Non-Partisan leagues, Farmer-Labor parties, La Follette third parties, are not the new immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe whom nativist opinion stigmatizes as unpromising material for the making of good Americans. Our political insurgent movements have been carried forward by the older immigrant stocks from Northern and Western Europe, where it has not actually been the old native American blood in Kansas. Hailing from the socially advanced and highly educated Protestant North, the Scandinavian immigrants who peopled Minnesota, the Dakotas and, largely, Wisconsin should constitute the most conservative element in the country. Actually they are found in our political life standing much further apart from the national median point than is the case with the urban elements of the new immigration, non-Nordic, heavily non-Protestant, and of a lower cultural standard in their homeland. We do not today speak as often as people did a generation ago about the Irish vote and the German vote. In New York we do speak of the Jewish vote and particularly in New York City, the greatest Jewish community in all history. But the German vote and the Scandinavian vote are today a reality if stated in geographical terms—Wisconsin, Minnesota and the Dakotas. A form of behavior which in the Irish, the Jews and the Italians would be described as clannishness and separatism has been accepted as perfectly consonant with Americanism in the North Central states. The only dynasty which this country has known since the fall of the House of Adams is the House of La Follette in Wisconsin extending over a period of nearly forty years. It is of Nordic stock.

5

It became a basic doctrine with the radical supporters of President Roosevelt that the United States has been integrated by time and circumstance to the point where the separate states are an anomaly. As Mr Roosevelt himself said in one connection, dust storms and floods know no state lines. The fallacy here consists in a confusion between uniformity and interdependence. That the different sections of the country need each other more than they did at the beginning of our national history is obvious; and from this it will follow that the Federal Government needs the power to cross state lines for purposes which formerly did not exist. To assert that the different parts of the United States are more uniform than they were one hundred and fifty years ago is another matter. The lowest forms of life are uniform masses of protoplasm which can be divided without serious consequence; the parts are not interdependent. The highly differentiated members of the human body are vitally interdependent.

From the thesis that we are a nation and not a collection of regions the New Deal extremist went on to argue that if Alabama can ruin the Massachusetts textile industry by permitting child labor and a long working day the Federal Government must step in to do Massachusetts justice. But we may put the case in another way. If Alabama wishes to develop a textile industry to take up its slack labor power, to industrialize itself as every backward nation tries to do in order to lift its standard of living—India, China, Russia—why should Massachusetts be permitted to impose its own standards on Alabama and render Alabama helpless to compete? The same school of thought that now upholds progressive Massachusetts against backward Alabama will be found to argue that a century ago New England set out to destroy Negro slavery because slavery competed with free labor in the North. Is not the same selfish motive today at work crippling Southern competition in the name of Labor?

The heart of the matter is that South Carolina and New York may today be more interdependent than they were one hundred and fifty years ago and yet be less alike. At the birth of the republic the country was uniformly living in an agricultural economy. To be sure New England and New York with their merchant classes differed in a measure from the less commercially developed South; but there were cities in the South, too. New York City in 1790 with thirty-three thousand inhabitants had one tenth of the population of New York State. In that year Charleston,

South Carolina, with sixteen thousand people had one fifteenth of the population of South Carolina. The disproportion is not overwhelming, and in any event New York State in 1790 was nine tenths rural. The roads in New York State were on the average probably not beyond comparison with South Carolina. The stagecoaches held the two states down to the same level; all the states in 1790 were in the horse-and-buggy age. Today we have a nation in which many sections literally are still in the horse-and-buggy age while others are in the airplane age. Today New York State has seventy per cent of her people living in cities of more than one hundred thousand population, and South Carolina has only seven per cent of her people in such cities. We have the agricultural West and South against the huge urban aggregations in the East, creating a difference in the way of life that the country did not know one hundred and fifty years ago.

We find, then, in 1940 a country in its economic life much more diversified than in 1790. From this diversity two opposite conclusions may be deduced. Advocates of centralization will maintain that a strong national power is needed to hold conflicting interests in check and to harmonize them. The States Rights advocate will say to harmonize, yes; but not to iron out, not to stretch the whole life of the country on a Procrustean bed. The mere fact that one may fly between the two oceans in ten hours and from New York to Atlanta in six hours does not mean that the normal pulse of the common life beats everywhere alike. The everyday life in Atlanta is largely shaped by Atlanta conditions and in New York by New York conditions. It has been the bitter plaint of the American farmer that his plight was ignored by the rest of the country during an entire decade before 1930 when prosperity ruled in the industrial East.

If labor conditions in Alabama differ sharply from Massachusetts the Federal Government cannot, in so many words, step in to prevent Alabama from "ruining" New England's textile industry. Unless cognizance is taken of a legitimate differential between Massachusetts and Alabama there will be trouble. That elementary truth, ignored in the first great outburst of reforming zeal, soon forced recognition in the NRA codes of 1933 and subsequent Federal wages-and-hours legislation.

The principal error in the extremist case for social progress through Federalization is the exaggerated emphasis it lays on economic factors. Granted the primary influence of economics on mass behavior, the modern world teems with evidence that economics is far from being the sole factor. It is not realistic thinking to deplore the ravages of Nationalism and ignore the fact that Nationalism, in varying degree, does shape eco-

nomics in the international field. Here at home people will insist on discussing the Child Labor Amendment exclusively in terms of regional differences in wages and living standards; but in 1937 ratification of the Child Labor Amendment was defeated in New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut, not by economic interests or political interests but by the intervention of the Catholic church. Quite openly the Catholic bishops repaired to Albany and served notice on the Legislature that the proposed Amendment was regarded as a threat to Catholic schools and the rights of Catholic parents.

Here would be one answer to the question whether we are a nation or a collection of regions. We are a nation, but it is poor statesmanship and patriotism to overlook the fact that one half of the Catholic population of the country is concentrated on the Atlantic coast north of Delaware, but in the South the Catholic population constitutes scarcely a trace. A uniform educational law for Alabama and Massachusetts can be easily defended as one way to lift educational standards in Alabama, but such an educational policy, it is hardly necessary to say, would be frustration and folly. That is why the separate states or regions must be left to adapt themselves to their special circumstances; and that is why national action for social progress must restrict itself to what is absolutely essential, preferring conversion to compulsion. Only the economic and political crises of the depression have made it possible for people to forget our famous Prohibition experiment. In a moment of war enthusiasm the American people told itself that it was a nation and not a regional alliance on Prohibition as well as on national defense. The Eighteenth Amendment was passed in Congress by a vote of six to one in the Senate and four to one in the House and was ratified by forty-six states in a little more than a year. This was done by a nation that did not, on Prohibition, feel nationally but regionally, as events showed very soon.

6

Regionalism is the name for political thinking in terms of geographical units larger than a state and smaller than the nation. It has the advantage of being free from the odious meaning which a tragic phase of our history has attached to Sectionalism; and in theory a region is smaller than a section. Regionalism as a creed made its appearance in intellectualist circles in the border South and practically concerns itself with the South as a section. Regionalism has also the prestige of modern scientific precision. The region is an area geographically or historically conditioned; it is usually a river basin or a number of such drainage areas. The arena

of the TVA project is such a natural region; and perhaps it is not altogether accident that the best-known schools of Regional thinking have their seat in Tennessee and the neighboring North Carolina.

The basic doctrine in regionalism is decentralization. It is a protest against Federal centralization and nation-wide uniformity without retreating all the way back into the state. For that matter, States' Rights in practice have not been the rights of a single state but of a group of states. They began with the Kentucky-Virginia Resolutions under John Adams. They expressed New England sectionalist opposition to the War of 1812. They were the whole South in the culminating tragedy of 1861. The other phase of States' Rights is important enough, namely, the division of functions between the individual state and the Federal Government; but when the issue assumes historic proportions it tends to take on the character of a balance between the Federal Government and a region—New England, the South, the Northwest Territory, the new Progressive West of which we have been speaking, the High Plains, the Pacific coast with its own strongly marked traits.

The doctrine that the region rather than the state is the logical unit for autonomous action has much force, provided we leave enough room for idiosyncratic cases. Two neighboring states will be bound closely together by geography and economics but will differ sharply in temper; there are strong individualities among the states, like Maryland in the Middle Atlantic area or Kansas in the farm belt. Normally the natural setting determines the frontiers of a region. Within these frontiers regionalism is the doctrine of self-determination, of provincialism. It is the converse of Government from the center. It is a geographic unit being true to its own genius while operating in the national framework.

That is the democratic ideal. Actually the followers of the regionalist philosophy may have found their inspiration in postwar Europe. The new Soviet Russia abolished the old provinces and in their places erected Areas and Regions. Similar changes in the map of Germany have been made under the Third Reich. There is, however, a vital difference between the new Regions in revolutionary Europe of today and our own regionalist aims. Over there the aim is just the opposite of decentralization; the new Regions enjoy no autonomy, though they may have their administrative uses. The primary object in setting up Regions has been to obliterate old political divisions, landmarks and loyalties, to wipe the slate clean, to make the break with the past complete. For this reason the comparatively small provinces of Czarist Russia have been consolidated into larger Regions, which is just the opposite procedure from that in France after 1789 when two dozen historic provinces were carved up

into more than fourscore Departments. The object was the same in both instances, to erase ancient boundaries and regional attachments and enhance the authority of the new central regime. The concept of region in the Tennessee Valley Authority is not the concept of the Tennessee intellectualist regionalists. TVA does not connote regional autonomy but Federal authority.

We may conclude with the reminder that the region, as a halfway house between state and nation, is not unknown in this country, though the name is new. The country is divided into ten Federal judicial circuits and into twelve Federal Reserve districts both of which approximate the region. We have army-corps areas, postal zones, time zones, freight-rate zones. It would be going too far afield to stress our looser regions and zones, such as the circulation areas boasted by metropolitan newspapers, the trading zones claimed by big cities. We have milksheds, by analogy with watersheds; they form a unit in the problems of the very important milk industry. Watershed rights and problems create regions, as when New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania negotiate treaties affecting the water supply of New York City, or California, Nevada, Arizona and Colorado have their treaties about the Colorado River.

No doubt the treaty method is a cumbrous way of promoting regional action among the states, but it has the very high merit of conforming to the national ideal of voluntary co-operation for the common good in the face of a special task.

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CHAPTER XVIII

The Press

AN INQUIRY into the American press and its role in the nation's life might profitably begin by asking what is a newspaper, or better still, what's in the paper today? This is said in no spirit of condescension to the reading public. The practicing journalist, like the newspaper reader, needs to have his mind refreshed at intervals concerning the nature of his work and the character of the product which he launches on the market every day in the year. For that matter the working newspaperman stands in greater need of such a periodical re-examination because he is too close to the problem. He lacks the perspective of the outsider. Very likely, too, he lacks the inclination to stand away from his work for the purpose of analyzing it and relating it to the whole social scheme.

We may begin with the proposition that by far the largest portion of the news which appears in the daily paper is not new. It is not new in the sense usually attached to news. The major part of the contents of the daily paper is not concerned with the extraordinary but with the ordinary, not with the sensational but with the routine, not with the things which the public eagerly reads because they never happened before, but with the things that the reader expects to find in the newspaper because he has always found them there, day in, day out. The managing editor of one of our great metropolitan newspapers used to say that in planning the next issue of the paper he always began with the last page and worked backward to page one. The reason for this will become apparent further on in this chapter, but we may anticipate the detailed proof by saying that this very distinguished craftsman had in mind the basic truth that the bulk of the news in a newspaper is not new; and this despite the fact that the editor of whom we are speaking was a

genius in the field of the news that is truly new, the front-page news, the "spot" news.

It will help us to understand our problem if we pick up a copy of today's big metropolitan newspaper and follow in the footsteps of the man who planned and built it for us, moving backward from page 48, the last page, towards page 1 for a bird's-eye view of its contents. The log of our journey would read as follows:

Page 48 is two thirds given over to display advertisements. The news consists of a local crime story and a picture of Soviet Russia's women aviators.

Page 47 is weather and shipping. Nearly the whole page is devoted to meteorological tables and to lists of ship arrivals and departures. Part of one column is an account of labor disputes in the maritime industry.

Pages 46-45 are the Classified Advertisements. They are the small notices, published in groups and dealing with a variety of subjects, such as situations wanted, help wanted, apartments to rent and similar matters.

Pages 43-34 are the world of Business, usually called the financial section. Here are the stock-market tables with accompanying comment, the bond market, the money market, the great commodity markets, the railroads. It will be noted that the space comprises ten pages or more than one fifth of the whole paper.

Pages 33-29 are sports and need no further explanation.

Page 28 is society news.

Pages 27-26 are theater, music, the screen, art and related subjects.

Page 25 is the first page of the second section, technically known as the split page. It is given over to local news of a picturesque, non-exciting "human-interest" character. Large daily newspapers appear in two sections for convenience in handling.

Page 24 is chiefly display advertising.

Page 23 is the page opposite the editorial page and is given up to vital statistics—obituaries, birth notices, death notices and related subjects.

Page 22 is the editorial page.

Page 21 is the book page and is made up of reviews, news and advertisements.

The rest of the newspaper from Page 20 back to Page 1 is general news and advertisements in approximately equal proportions. Here we have ten pages of news of which a considerable part is new news. As it happens this is a day free from war scares and exciting crimes. A political campaign is under way and it takes up most of our ten pages.

It is a campaign involving the possibility of far-reaching results for the nation, but they are quiet pages. A month earlier these pages would have throbbed with the imminent threat of a world war, but even in such times of crisis our detailed examination of the daily newspaper would show only a part of the news space given over to new news: a sizable portion, to be sure, but still a portion. In the typical newspaper of forty-eight pages which we have just analyzed the new news would be ten pages, or about one fifth. In a war crisis the new news might rise to a fourth of the whole newspaper.

The same results would be obtained from a survey of the contents of a six-page daily newspaper in the Middle West, or a twelve-page weekly paper in New England. It is not a point that calls for detailed proof. We take it for granted that the small-town newspaper or country paper is the record of the usual and the unexciting to the outsider—the humdrum. It is a chronicle of everyday life. The fact which the public does not generally recognize is that this routine character is true also of the big metropolitan journal. The public hardly suspects how much of the simple and the homely life is mirrored in the city newspaper; it is a truth which too often escapes the knowledge of the newspaper editor himself. When the practicing journalist—as sometimes happens—rises to defend his profession against the charge of triviality, of sensationalism, of undue preoccupation with the sordid aspects of life, of insufficient attention to the sane and normal and constructive items in the daily human record, he usually makes out a much weaker case for himself than the facts would warrant or even demand. Usually the editor's defense becomes a plea of guilty with extenuating circumstances. The journalist will say, in substance, that it is not his fault if news is news. It is not the editor's fault if a man who runs away with another man's wife is news, but 9999 husbands who do not run away are not news. A fast express train which runs into an open draw and kills half a hundred passengers is news, but one hundred thousand trains which arrive at their destination without mishap and on time are not news. A surgical operation on a baby born with its stomach upside down is news, but normal babies are not news. It is not the editor's fault if the unusual is news and the usual is not news.

This is the profession's standard reply to the standard criticism of sensationalism, vulgarity, inanity in the news. In the case of the frankly sensational press the defense may pass over into defiance: this sort of thing is what the public wants. The better newspapers will argue that they do print news of a worthier kind. They publish news of lives saved in great public-health campaigns as well as news of calamity and

misfortune. They have accounts of the progress of public education as well as accounts of crime rooted in ignorance. They have news about a rising standard of living as well as stories of crime rooted in poverty. They give much space to the victories of science and discovery; much space to literature, art, international understanding.

Even then the newspaper apologist is presenting only part of his case and not the strongest side. He is thinking only of his new-news pages. He is thinking of the first ten or twelve news pages in our daily newspaper of forty-eight pages as we scrutinized it above. He overlooks his other thirty-five pages, more or less, which deal with the old news; yet it is news that his critics would acknowledge to be the very best kind of news. It is in fact the kind of news which they reproach the editor for omitting.

Being born is a very ancient human interest and occupation; and it has actually gained in prestige as it has grown rarer in recent times. The daily newspaper has much to say about population increase. The subject is treated in the paid birth announcements, in the unpaid news items on the society page, in the news stories dealing with lower diphtheria figures or the fight against this nation's abnormal maternity death rate. The subject of birth and growth appears in the school pages and other pages of which we shall take note further down. It is not true that only babies with reversed stomachs interest the press. Normal babies are encountered throughout the daily paper.

Being married is an ancient and still very important interest. Newspapers have their paid marriage announcements and their wedding news in the society page. Photographs showing brides and bridegrooms walking down the church steps are far from rare in the press. For that matter one might argue that the whole field of society news, so amply covered in the newspapers, is primarily concerned with marriage. Palm Beach and Aiken, Newport and Junior League and the yacht races are in very large measure preliminary to that photograph of bride and groom walking down the church steps.

Death as a normal event is far from slighted. It is a tradition in newspaper offices that the very first thing to which many people turn in the morning papers is the obituary page.

Buying and selling is a deep-rooted human interest; and we have seen that the newspaper may devote as much as ten pages out of forty-eight to Business. It will be noted that this is not the new business news of page 1, dealing with a sensational Wall Street bankruptcy or defalcation, or a sudden collapse in the French franc, or an important statement by the Administration about business, or a statement by the

National Association of Manufacturers about the Administration. The ten solid pages of Business which the paper carries day after day are inside pages towards the end of the newspaper, dealing with routine. But because they are routine they are far more interesting to businessmen than most of the business drama on the first page. They are the absorbing routine news dealing with the number of bags of coffee on the docks at Santos, the unfilled orders of the United States Steel Corporation and, of course, the Stock Exchange tables.

Labor and wages are a very intimate interest to people. There is labor news of an immediate kind in the Help Wanted and Situations Wanted advertisements in the back of the paper.

Play counts for a great deal in the American scheme of life and the news in the sports pages is largely news of a routine kind. There is nothing sensational in the fact that the Yankees or the Detroit Tigers have won the ball game. One of the two teams was bound to win the game. Yet the routine news, as we may well call it, is the most absorbing of all news for six months in the year to many million Americans.

Many readers, no doubt, will be moved to reject our analysis of a newspaper's contents and the implied revaluation of what is news as excessively subtle and technical and altogether far-fetched. The reading public does not consist of editors or professors of journalism and it does not go in for spectroscope and test-tube analysis. In the face of our elaborate argument about the value of the inside pages the public knows that news is what appears on page 1. The weather yesterday at 3 P.M., or the victor in the 18.1-inch balk-line championship is not news in the sense in which a landslide election, an international crisis, a big jump in automobile employment or a big shipwreck is news.

But that is only begging the whole question. The revised definition of news we have presented, so far from being a piece of subtle dialectic, is really a faithful description of news as the general public understands it, as the public consumes it. It is not wire-drawn theory but everyday fact that people read the weather news, the news from Palm Beach and Greenbrier, and the names of the wedding guests more eagerly and more consistently than they read anything but a very small portion of the new news, the front-page news. We may put it bluntly. Except for some highly sensational murder or romance or lowering war cloud, the front page of the daily newspaper seldom evokes the direct and immediate interest with which the Wall Street man turns to the financial pages, the real-estate man to the realty page and most of us to the sports pages, the wedding pages and the obituary pages. Day in day out, the great volume of public interest is found, not in the front pages, but in

the inside pages. Surveys in this field have been conducted by the newspapers themselves, by schools of journalism, by advertising agencies, by sociologists. They substantially agree on how the American people reads the daily paper.

The businessman glances at the headlines on the front page and turns to the financial pages. In the course of the day, often in the evening, he manages to find some time for the general news.

The professional man is very much like the businessman.

The white-collar man in the great majority glances over the headlines on the front page and turns to the sports pages.

The manual worker does not even glance at the front-page headlines but turns immediately to the sports pages.

The housewife in the higher-income classes turns to the social activities, the department-store advertisements and the vital statistics—obituaries, weddings, births. Sometimes she glances at the headlines on the front page.

The shopgirl and the factory girl read the serial love story, the motion-picture news and the heart-throb columns. It is said in the newspaper trade that seventy-five per cent of all women readers are consumers of the serial stories and heart-interest features.

This is what we meant by saying at the beginning of the chapter that most of the news in the newspaper, and the most interesting news in the sense of coming closest home to the greatest number of readers, is the news that is not new. It is, naturally, fresh and new to the day, but it is the new day's version of old things; the new stock-market quotations about a familiar commodity called railroads; the new price of well-known things like coffee and sugar and pork; the new arrivals and departures of familiar ships on established schedules; the new births and marriages and deaths; the new standing of the old baseball clubs; the new piece of advice to the young woman in love, to the new mother, and young cook, and to the troubled parents of difficult children. These are new installments in an ancient story, and they make up the bulk of the daily paper. We pick up the morning paper and see war and famine in China, violence in the heart of Europe, murders and kidnappings at home, and say, "What a terrible world it is!" but we have not really mentioned the most important parts of the paper.

The editor himself cannot be said to have read his newspaper when he asks plaintively if it is his fault that runaway husbands are news but stay-at-home husbands are not news. Actually the 9999 husbands who have not deserted their families are to be found in many parts of the daily paper. The loyal, non-fugitive husband is to be found in the Situa-

tions Wanted, Male, where he is looking for work to support the family whom he has not abandoned. He appears in the Help Wanted columns where he advertises for assistants in the nice little business he has built up; if business continues the way it has been going the boy and girl whom he has not abandoned are pretty sure to go to college. The decent, undramatic husband may be traced in the cheerful news items from the Board of Health. A steady decline in infant mortality signifies, among other things, that heads of families do not desert their wives and children, but stay with them and provide for them.

Scores of thousands of trains which do not run into open drawbridges and do not kill their passengers are present in the daily paper. They are implicit in the mention of well-known people who are continually taking the train for San Francisco or Palm Beach or Boston without the least doubt in the reader's mind that the travelers will arrive at their destination safe and on the minute. The news columns, the advertisements and the pictures abound in lovely motion-picture queens and strong captains of industry who travel on splendid Limiteds and Fliers and Clippers and Arrows and Zephyrs. The figures for freight-car loadings are so large that obviously not all the freight trains in the country are wrecked and their cargoes destroyed.

Babies who are born with their stomachs in a natural position are frequently encountered in the newspaper. They appear in the company of non-runaway fathers of the type already discussed, in a story about a hot Sunday on the beaches. We find children in the company of their non-deserted mothers traveling on the non-catastrophic trains and ships. The normal healthy baby appears in the account of a new school year in New York with a million children on the registration lists; or the mention of six million boys and girls in the nation's high schools; or a million and a half young men and women in the colleges. It is strange that the editor should feel it necessary to argue that normal children are not news, when his own Sunday Supplement pictures are crowded with normal children playing baseball, football, hockey, tennis, or sprinting and high-jumping in athletic meets in the public stadiums and playgrounds.

One omission by our editor-defendant is particularly startling. He has actually forgotten the one thing in his paper of which he is usually supposed to be thinking altogether too much; and that is the advertising pages. He argues sorrowfully that it is not his fault if violence and disaster and abnormality are news, yet he devotes one half of his newspaper—ten pages out of twenty, twenty-four pages out of forty-eight, ninety pages out of a hundred and eighty on Sunday—to advertising,

which is exclusively concerned with the cheerful side of life, with the normal, the healthy, the routine. The advertisements of new Spring suits, new fur coats, new refrigerators, new apartments, are close kin to the news of the coffee market and the bond market and the real-estate market. They are unsensational, fundamental, concerned with things for which no editor need apologize.

Serious writers about the press and its failings do often mention the advertising pages but only to discuss their pernicious influence on the news columns. The advertiser is the familiar villain of the piece; his heavy hand falls on a free press and grinds it into the mire. These serious commentators on the press are seemingly unaware of the great normal, sane, decent world revealed in the advertising columns. It is a world of building lots, houses, apartments, foods, clothes, schools, travel, automobiles, radios. We never find a real-estate advertisement offering five-room apartments guaranteed to collapse and kill the tenants. Railroad companies do not advertise streamlined Fliers which fly off the rails. In the Classified Ads the gangsters do not offer to take one's personal enemies for a ride at fifty dollars apiece and furnish their own guns and taxis. The normal, healthy tale of American life is told in the advertising columns. It is part of the news of the day. That it is news which the public reads is shown by the enormous sums paid out by the advertisers.

2

We began our inquiry into the state of the press by trying to arrive at a concrete, matter-of-fact knowledge of the contents of a typical American newspaper, such as we do not always encounter in discussions on the subject; and we believe we have shown that there is a much greater volume of reading matter in the daily paper than is usually assumed. It is now in order to point out that there is a good deal more to the press than the daily newspaper.

Press and newspaper are synonymous in people's minds. Actually the question of the press and public opinion, or in its broadest reaches, the question of the press and free institutions, must take account of the periodical press as well as the daily newspaper. In fact the journal that dedicates itself primarily to opinion is not in the great majority of cases a daily newspaper.

We have had in the last decade an average of twenty-one hundred daily newspapers. The number was down to approximately two thousand in the year 1931 when the business depression was making itself felt. It rose to something over twenty-two hundred in the year 1938. The

aggregate circulation has been roughly forty million copies a day six days in the week and thirty million copies on Sunday.

We have between six thousand and seven thousand weekly newspapers and periodicals with an aggregate circulation of something under fifty million copies at the beginning of the 1930s and close to sixty million copies in the year 1935. It is obvious that the familiar national weekly of huge circulation is not the typical weekly journal. About one fourth of the aggregate weekly circulation belongs to the local small-town or rural newspaper. At least another quarter would be in the periodicals with a wider range but not in the same class with the major national weeklies. To these later giants of the weekly press, some of them much less widely known than others, might go something over a third of the aggregate weekly circulation of sixty million copies.

A more useful basis of comparison between the daily and the periodical press might be found in the total volume of circulation in the course of a year. The daily newspapers in that period distribute approximately fifteen billion copies, the weekly publications something under three billion copies, and the monthly publications probably a billion and a half copies. By sheer mass impact, and dismissing for the moment the question of relative influence, the daily newspaper would thus be five times as important as the weekly journal which in turn would be twice as important as the monthly publications. Taking this as a nation of thirty million families, in the course of a month the average American family has read forty daily newspapers, nine weekly journals, five monthly magazines.

What is the relative weight of each of these types of journal in molding American public opinion and, beyond it, in shaping the permanent ideas of the American people? We enter obviously the realm of conjecture, yet we can try our best to keep speculation in touch with ascertainable fact. Instinctively, when we think of the power of the press we think of the daily newspaper, always hot from the griddle, always bringing the latest bulletin—the latest victory or disaster, the latest right or wrong, the latest reassuring communiqué, the latest alarm. The politician in the sidewalk café snatches the newspaper from the shouting vendor and leaps without loss of time to the top of a table to harangue the crowd for a march on the Bastille or on Parliament or on the Convention hall—it is a familiar symbol of the power of the press which may be as faithful to the facts as most symbols are. But whatever may have been true of the coffeehouses of Queen Anne when English journalism first became a power, or the militant newspapers of the French Revolution, or the café politicians of Europe since then, the

picture does not hold good for this country. With us the shaping of public opinion is less the work of city gossipers in a club or a back room than of half a dozen rural debaters at the general store or in the local garage. With us the small-town and country newspaper which is most often a weekly journal is more influential than the daily press. Primarily this would be due to the very fact that it is a small-town rural press. As late as the 1930 census fifty-one per cent of the population of the country was living in places having less than eight thousand inhabitants; but this small advantage of two per cent does not really measure the weight which the nonurban half of the American people carries in the life of the nation. In these small towns and farm homes the ratio of native-born is much higher than the cities. The ratio of old-stock population is much higher; and it is still a fact of prime importance for the realistic observer that the American of the older stocks is a more powerful force, man for man, than the American of later origin. Country journalism, in addressing itself to this better entrenched and more highly privileged section of the American people, has right at the start a selective advantage over the urban daily press. To this we may add the a priori argument that a weekly newspaper which is read and absorbed in the seclusion and comparative leisure of the small town or the farm is likely to exercise a greater pull on its reader than the average copy of the metropolitan daily paper, crammed with a bewildering array of reading matter and consumed amid the distractions of urban life. Psychologically it is a sound contention that a single copy of a weekly newspaper slowly absorbed may succeed in driving home a point more effectively than seven daily newspapers repeating the same point in the course of a week to a metropolitan audience.

Similar considerations would apply to the influence exercised by our monthly press, but with important reservations. We have estimated the total volume of annual circulation at three billion copies for the weekly journals and one half as many for the monthly publications, but we should hesitate to claim for the monthly press a proportional weight in public affairs. One reason would be that out of a monthly circulation of perhaps one hundred and twenty-five million copies as much as one half might belong to the "pulp" magazines which dispense popular fiction of a very elementary kind, and to their closely related gossip magazines dedicated chiefly to Hollywood. But this still leaves us an impressive circulation of more than fifty million copies a month, say half a billion copies a year, of a far higher type whose influence must not be underestimated.

There have been times in the history of this country when the monthly

magazines attained a position of major importance. The muckraking magazines denounced by Theodore Roosevelt seemed for a time almost to have wrested the leadership of public opinion from the daily newspaper; certainly if measured by the volume of clamor and sensation. At the height of the muckraking fervor the militant monthlies kept as good a pace with the news as their Sunday contemporaries. A second militant period in the history of the monthly press came in the 1920s when publications like *Harper's Magazine* and *Scribner's* took on a heavy radical tinge, bolder on the whole in the realm of the new ethics than in the new politics and economics, but sufficiently advanced in the latter field, too. They reflected the ferment of new ideas released by the World War and stimulated in the 1930s by the business depression. In milder form the new ideas have been reflected in the women's magazines with an aggregate monthly circulation of perhaps twenty million copies. The women's magazines exercise a long-range influence affecting permanent attitudes and beliefs rather than shaping thought and action on immediate questions. Obviously this does not minimize their ultimate importance in the scheme of American life; it is certainly not a contention to be made in these pages dedicated to an inquiry into permanent forces and agencies in the national life. It may very well be that in the long run a woman's magazine devoting itself primarily to the home and to children and thereby molding the forms of everyday life will make a deeper impress on American history than the great metropolitan newspaper or the influential farmer's weekly.

Nor can we overlook still another type of periodical, weekly or monthly, which seldom figures in the general public's thoughts on the subject. This is the trade and technical press, in its widest sense. It ranges all the way from the *American Economic Review* and *School and Society* to the *Iron Age* and the *Barber's Journal*. The nation's opinions, attitudes and actions are being shaped to a very considerable degree by a part of the press which people seldom take into account. A deeper analysis, a scrutiny far beyond our present scope, might show that the *Engineering Journal* or the New York daily publication known as *Ladies' Wear* is a more important public influence than many a big daily newspaper. The trade publication is intimately bound up with the primary interest of livelihood. It falls in more closely with the professional cast of mind. It represents and influences a compact public.

Change in a nation's way of life is more clearly mirrored in the periodical press than in the daily newspapers. If we take for instance the New Frankness we find it reflected in the language of the daily press which now tolerates the mention of things formerly taboo, but it is not a

radical change. The farthest advance here is in the theater and book reviews which will frankly discuss frank plays and books and even go out of their way sometimes to use words like "bawdy" and "prostitute." Frankness has got into the pictorial advertisements which will go far in representing the intimacies of women's dress. But the news columns and editorial columns are "clean," startlingly so, sometimes laughably so. Men and women in the news are still accused of a statutory offense, meaning adultery, and pretty ladies are the "intimate friends" of European crowned heads. Men very rarely have mistresses in our newspapers, even in the tabloids; they have intimate friends and constant companions. In the periodical press the bold new ideas have been freely discussed and bold new words have become commonplace. The daily press will go as far as to speak, occasionally, of syphilis instead of the discreet "social disease." But our newspaper columns can hardly be said to have mentioned the subject of chastity in women, a theme which has received considerable attention in the periodical press.

3

Our summary of what might be called the various channels of press influence and their relative importance started out with the unspoken assumption that the influence of the press is a real thing. The thesis has often been questioned. The traditional power of the press has been challenged on the basis of good evidence in hand. The power of the press is more frequently challenged by the play of everyday human inconsistency; we find it easy to deny the power of the press when it suits our purpose. Normally in the United States we assume a free press to be as much a part of our institutions as the air which we breathe is a part of our physical existence. If ever we were tempted to question this organic bond between free government and the free expression of opinion our doubts have been resolved by the march of events in the unfree countries of the Western world since the World War. In the new dictatorships absolutism and censorship have gone hand in hand. One of the very first moves after a successful coup d'état is to muzzle the press. In the halfway regimes that stop short of autocracy the extent to which a government has approached the autocratic ideal may be measured by the extent to which freedom of the printed word has been curtailed.

And yet here at home we face the anomaly of men who describe themselves as passionately devoted to democracy but who on occasion will scoff at the so-called power of the press. To be sure it is not a

reasoned position at which they have arrived in the course of time. It is rather the all too human response to a particular event. If the cause in which our hearts are enlisted rides to victory with press support we gladly hail the power of the press. If our cause triumphs against a preponderance of press support then there is no such thing as the power of the press. If our opponents march from victory to victory with the support of the newspapers then the power—the maleficent power—of the press reaches its acme. This is a trait of our weak human nature which we may expect to find at all periods in history. It has been singularly prominent as part of our post-Armistice faith in the power of Propaganda.

Long before the Armistice our unhappy record in municipal government was a perpetual reminder of the severe limitations on the power of the press. Tammany Hall held sway in the face of overwhelming press opposition. Tammany Hall sometimes won elections without the support of a single reputable newspaper. Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco and other cities have a similar history. It went beyond local government. National elections have been won against a preponderantly hostile press. Indeed, up to the year 1932 a Democratic victory in a Presidential election would in itself be a denial of the power of the press, seeing that the newspapers of the country have been in a great majority Republican. On the other hand, the most crushing defeats inflicted on Democratic candidates for President were experienced by men like Alton B. Parker, a generation ago, by John W. Davis in 1924 and by Alfred E. Smith four years later, to whom fell a larger measure of newspaper support than normally accrues to a Democratic nominee. It was not, however, until the Presidential election of 1936 that something almost like an antipress philosophy began to be preached by ardent liberals. The striking disparity between Mr Roosevelt's huge popular vote and his newspaper support was a legitimate subject for comment. We may go further and say it was a legitimate subject for satirical comment by Mr Roosevelt's supporters and by candid critics of the whole American scene. The opportunity was not overlooked. The caustic lessons were immediately forthcoming, but they were based on such a distorted state of things that the edge of the satire ultimately turned against its authors. Once more was illustrated our unrivaled native capacity for embracing and repeating general statements that are patently opposed to our immediate knowledge and experience.

Shortly after the 1936 election it began to be heard that President Roosevelt had won his tremendous victory with only twenty per cent

of the newspapers on his side. In the course of a few weeks the estimate of Mr Roosevelt's press support in the late campaign was cut down by his more ardent supporters to fifteen per cent. One quizzical paragrapher saw the time close at hand when Mr Roosevelt would be the victor in 1936 with only ten per cent of the press behind him, and ultimately he might yet win the greatest popular triumph in the history of the Presidency against "the virtually united opposition of the American press," or something of the kind.

The facts were by no means so hard on the newspapers of America. In the whole country Mr Roosevelt in 1936 had between thirty-five and forty per cent of the newspaper circulation. In the fifteen largest cities he had thirty per cent of the circulation; excluding New York, the Roosevelt circulation may have been nearer twenty-five per cent. On the other hand, the small town and country dailies and weeklies were evenly divided between Mr Roosevelt and his opponent.

The fact remains, of course, that in the 1936 election President Roosevelt polled a vote almost exactly in inverse proportion to his newspaper support. In the nation he had sixty-three per cent of the votes and between thirty-five and forty per cent of the newspaper circulation. In the fifteen leading cities he had seventy per cent of the vote and thirty per cent of the newspaper circulation. The city figures are even more impressive if we omit New York City where the Roosevelt and the opposition circulations were about equal. In the other cities the ratio was four to one against Mr Roosevelt. In some cities it was much higher. In one or two cities Mr Roosevelt had no newspaper support at all. Yet his majorities everywhere ranged from decisive to crushing. Whatever the power of the press might be it certainly was not the power to command the earthquake and reverse the tides.

It was a commonplace until the second Roosevelt election in 1936 that this is a Republican country. Beginning with the Harding election in 1920 when woman suffrage added an effective sixty per cent to the electorate, this normal Republican margin was usually estimated at five million votes in an aggregate major party vote of thirty-five to forty million. It would mean that the normal Republican vote was close to sixty per cent of both parties, and this would be not far from the Republican share of the newspaper circulation of the country as we have appraised it above. A close correspondence, however, between Republican votes and Republican newspaper circulation is not to be explained by the reason commonly advanced. It was not Republican newspaper ascendancy that produced Republican election majorities but the other way about. Republican popular majorities gave the Republican

party its notable preponderance in the press. The newspapers did not shape the American people but shaped themselves to the people. In a normal Republican nation we had a normal Republican press, even as in the overwhelmingly Democratic South we have an overwhelmingly Democratic press. The press adapts itself to the general pattern. If ever the Democratic party takes over the majority status enjoyed by the Republican party from 1864 to 1928 ultimately a permanent majority of the American press will be found on the Democratic side.

If this statement of the interaction between public opinion and press leaves little of the so-called power of the press there is nothing we can do about it as long as we think of power in the sense of domination. It simply is not true that the press molds public opinion as it sees fit, swinging the mobile vulgus hither and thither according to whim, or party interest, or class interest, or the newspaper owner's individual profit. This doctrine attained an enormous vogue after the World War, for it was a generation which grew inordinately fond of the word Propaganda, and men cited propaganda as the irresistible force which shaped everything of which they happened to disapprove. The three Republican landslides beginning with the 1920 Presidential election were explained by Democrats and radicals as the fruit of Republican propaganda exercised through a controlled press. In the same temper the Roosevelt landslide in 1932 was explained by the leading Republican newspaper of the country as due largely to the "smearing" of President Hoover by the publicity director of the Democratic National Committee.

What the successive landslides after the World War actually show is that the power of the press has its very distinct limitations. The thundering majorities in five Presidential elections were determined by great mass movements acting under the spur of major forces, material or emotional, in which the newspapers and the propagandists were like chips on the crest of the wave. In 1920 it was a violent popular reaction against the World War. In 1924 it was "Coolidge prosperity" superimposed on a murderous Democratic feud which tore the party in two. In 1928 it was the revolt of Protestant America against a Catholic nominee on the Democratic ticket. In 1932 the Republicans were overwhelmed by an economic depression which shook the whole world. In 1936 it was the continued effects of the depression, reinforced by the play of new social forces which we must wait to describe and appraise; but certainly it was not propaganda or the newspapers. Little can be said for the notion that in 1932, after three years of business prostration, with twelve million men out of work and the national income down to half of 1929, it needed a slick Democratic press agent to defeat Mr Hoover.

The power of the press is far from being an illusion if we take care to redefine both terms in accordance with realities. We must think of the power of the newspaper as stopping far short of domination, and we must think of the newspaper as consisting of a great deal more than just an editorial page plus a front page. We must think of the newspaper in the light of its complete contents as we sought to draw the picture in considerable detail at the start of the present chapter. People think primarily of the editorial page when they speak of a newspaper throwing its support to this party and that candidate. A newspaper is for this man when it urges his election on the editorial page. It is against that man when it assails him on the editorial page. To be sure, partisanship may invade the news columns and especially the headlines. The news may be colored by emphasis or suppression. The reporter may be guilty of editorializing. But again we find that this familiar accusation of news colored and editorialized rests on a narrow conception of what is the news in the paper. It fails to recognize that the great bulk of news in the paper cannot be colored. It could not be otherwise if a newspaper is technically a good newspaper. Such a newspaper is bound to give a complete picture of the nation and the times; and in so doing it cannot be partisan.

What do we mean, for instance, when we say that the New York *Herald Tribune* supported Mr Hoover and Mr Landon in 1932 and 1936, when we say that it bitterly opposed Mr Roosevelt? We mean primarily that the *Herald Tribune's* editorial page was strongly Republican. We may mean that its special writers in the noneditorial columns were anti-Roosevelt. We might go on to charge—if that is the way we felt—that even in the case of a fine newspaper like the *Herald Tribune* the straight news columns showed a tinge of partisanship.

Yet in a vital sense, the *Herald Tribune* was not against Mr Roosevelt but for him in 1932 and 1936. This stalwart Republican newspaper could not help being for the Democratic candidate because as a good newspaper it was bound to picture a state of things in the nation which made the victory of the Democratic candidate inevitable. The only way in which the *Herald Tribune* could have really supported Mr Hoover against Mr Roosevelt in 1932 was to suppress all of its pages except the editorial page; certainly it would have had to suppress four fifths of its pages. The *Herald Tribune* in 1932 was not supporting President Hoover as long as it continued to publish its stock-market pages with their devastating news, its general business pages mirroring a state of prostration, its general news reports showing a vast army of men out of work, its pages of news about bankruptcies, banks in liquidation, textile mills

closing down, shipping paralyzed, schools shut down for lack of funds—in short, the picture of a prodigious economic collapse. It is impossible to think of a newspaper reader so low in intelligence that he could not understand from any newspaper in the country that the nation in 1932 was in a state of bitter distress. In this sense there was not a single newspaper of consequence in the country that was for Mr Hoover and against Mr Roosevelt in 1932. The most cheerful statement of the facts in that year was bound to defeat Mr Hoover.

It was the same story in 1936. Four years earlier no Republican newspaper could hope to conceal from the American people the plight of the nation. In 1936 the newspapers were bound to be the record of a notable measure of recovery. The stock-market prices, the employment figures, the retail sales, the attendance at football games and basketball games and prize fights, the automobile sales, the sharp rise in marriage, the decrease in suicides from the somber figures of four years ago—here was a tale of returning national health told in a hundred different bulletins which a newspaper could not suppress without suppressing everything but its editorial page. The *Herald Tribune* and the Hearst press might be against Mr Roosevelt editorially, but when these papers called attention on their front page to the increasing number of Help Wanted advertisements in their inside columns they were arguing for Mr Roosevelt. At the peak of the 1936 campaign the *Chicago Tribune* failed to report a monster parade of Roosevelt supporters which was many hours in passing by the doors of the Tribune Building. This partisan gesture would be of little avail against the fact that the same number of the *Chicago Tribune* which slighted the Roosevelt parade was fat with advertisements of automobiles and department stores, unmistakably proclaiming a state of increased well-being in the country. In 1932 Mr Hoover was defeated by business depression. In 1936 Mr Roosevelt was re-elected by recovery. So it has regularly been in our Presidential elections; and as long as panic and prosperity continue to be mirrored in our newspapers these newspapers will be supporting the candidate designated by economic conditions for victory.

The power of the press consists in its ability to bring things out into the open. That is why in the European dictatorships the freedom of the press is among the first things to be scuttled. The autocrat is less afraid of hostile editorials than of hostile statistics. His primary concern is to load down his controlled newspapers with doctored figures. His mission in other words is to suppress and falsify. In 1933 the newspapers in Soviet Russia are "for" Joseph Stalin not only because they chant editorial hymns of praise to him, but because they suppress all mention

of a famine which may have taken as much as five million lives. Newspapers support Government by suppressing unfavorable facts about food prices and unemployment and homeless children and the ravages of social disease. German newspapers do not publish the number of workmen engaged in armament industries, so that we do not know what the Third Reich has really done to solve re-employment. Neither do the German newspapers print complete figures on the Government's financial operations. Italian newspapers print rhetoric instead of news. To be sure, the trained observer can glean something of the truth in Russia, Germany, Italy out of such figures and facts as do get into print; even the most skillful of censors cannot help letting an occasional cat out of the bag.

If in 1933 Soviet Russia were a democratic country with Joseph Stalin running for office, and if the newspapers sang his praises unceasingly on the editorial page but on other pages printed figures showing that more than half the horses and cattle in the country had perished in the process of farm collectivization and several million peasants had been deported from their homes, then the newspapers would really have been against Stalin, and Stalin would have been defeated. For the ultimate power of the press consists in telling the truth.

Strong political machines have not been alone in defying the press. Individual leaders have won popular support with very little assistance from the newspapers and against the opposition of the most powerful newspapers. This would be true of William J. Bryan in 1896 and of Upton Sinclair in his successful campaign for the Democratic nomination for governor of California in 1934 on the so-called Epic platform. Mr Sinclair was defeated in the election by his Republican opponent and the Epic movement quickly disintegrated; yet it does not do away with the fact that without the support of a single newspaper he did compel the Democratic party, in a year of Democratic ascendancy, to give him a nomination. His campaign was watched with lively apprehension by the country, not excluding the national leaders of his own party. Upton Sinclair was a passing phenomenon. That will not describe William J. Bryan for a decade and a half after 1896 or Senator Robert M. La Follette for a period of twenty years before the World War. Both men thought it necessary to set up their own weekly journal because of the very meager support lent them by the established newspaper press, even in their own parties. Actually the American public would have heard very little of the two men if its sole source of information had been Mr Bryan's *Commoner* or Senator La Follette's personal organ. The two men were strong enough to impose themselves on the news columns of the papers which

fought them editorially. Much of our knowledge of the classic writers of Greece and Rome is derived from the pages of the early Christian authors who quoted the pagan texts in order to refute them. The historians will have no difficulty in reconstructing Mr Bryan's personality, principles and record from the columns of a hostile press. This hostile press could not keep him from being one of the major forces in American life over a period of twenty years.

We must not fall into the error of supposing that the press has no power because it is not all-powerful. Its influence is always real if most of the time limited, often effective though invisible. The press must not be appraised solely by the defeats which it suffers. There may be still greater disasters which it has warded off. The press of New York City could not drive Tammany Hall permanently from the control of the Government, but it could set a limit even to Tammany Hall's audacity. The newspapers may not be strong enough to make good government a normal condition in our cities, but they are a warning to the politicians against letting conditions get too rotten. If the warning is disregarded and the time grows ripe for a popular uprising it is the newspapers that usually mobilize the forces of decency. The newspaper exposure has often been the signal for revolt. As long as there are newspapers there is always the danger that a disgruntled politician may blab and thus shatter the ancient machine formula of addition, division and silence.

Our intermittent newspaper victories over corrupt politics are thus the parallel of press campaigns in other countries which in times of emergency have proved effective. Such a case would be the assault of the Northcliffe press on the Asquith Government in the first year of the World War over the munitions shortage. Two years later David Lloyd George opened his campaign to supplant Prime Minister Asquith with a similar press attack. Yet the familiar picture of the big newspaper proprietor in the role of kingmaker is a false one. It does not apply to the Northcliffes and Beaverbrooks in Great Britain or to a William Randolph Hearst in this country. These newspaper magnates do not make prime ministers and Presidents, though they may frequently constitute themselves the trumpeters of a movement that makes and unmakes the heads of state. On a lower level than kings the power of the newspaper Warwicks is more real. They cannot at will make prime ministers in Great Britain but they can make cabinet ministers, since prime ministers find newspaper support worth a certain price. William Randolph Hearst's two dozen newspapers with a circulation of three million copies spread over the country were not powerful enough to raise Mr Hearst to the Presidency or to make him a Warwick to other Presidential aspirants.

His nearest approach to office was as an independent candidate for mayor of New York in a three-cornered fight in 1905 when he lost to the Democratic candidate by less than four thousand votes. The following year as the Democratic and Independent candidate for governor of New York State he was soundly beaten by Charles E. Hughes. The Hearst influence on a smaller stage, in the cities and Congressional districts, has been real, and in the bigger political divisions it has been important enough to win recognition from the dominant parties, usually the Democratic party with which Mr Hearst has been nominally affiliated. He could command a share of the judgeships, places on the state tickets below the governor, occasionally a United States senator.

What has been said of Mr Hearst's role in the national life would hold good in essence for other newspaper chains and syndicates; and it holds good for centralized authorship as well as centralized ownership. The influence of the press as an original directive force has not grown with the rise of newspaper chains and syndicated writers. In theory the influence of a man who owns twenty-five newspapers in twenty-five cities should be many times the influence exercised by the owner of a single newspaper. The journalist whose work is published in fifty or even a hundred newspapers should carry weight such as no single editor can even hope to approach. In practice that is far from being the case. We have seen that William R. Hearst with his twenty-five newspapers—in 1933—has not wielded anything like the power which an aggregate circulation of three million copies a day would suggest; and in the case of Mr Hearst we have to deal with a power which in 1938 had been functioning for more than forty years on the American scene, which had behind it the authority of great wealth derived from other sources than the Hearst newspapers and, it must be conceded, an affirmative personality such as we do not find among lesser known owners of newspaper chains.

Between newspaper circulation and original leadership there is no close connection. There is a story, no doubt told in malice, of how the London *Times* around the middle of the last century built up its reputation as *The Thunderer*. The management hired "impecunious clergymen" to go about the streets and public places of London and to enter into conversation with the crowd or to overhear what people were saying to each other. On the basis of reports brought back by these scouts *The Thunderer* would throw its support to causes lying close to the popular heart, and thus it acquired fame as a leader of British public opinion. It is the story of the French street orator who sees his audience suddenly rush off on some independent enterprise. "They are my people," he cries. "I am their leader. I must follow them."

We thus have the paradox that the larger the circulation of a newspaper or of a combination of newspapers, the less likely is it to exercise original leadership in the sense of imposing its own opinions on a hostile public or even an indifferent public. The individual members of a large newspaper chain are bound to be influenced by the special environment of their place of publication. To be sure, a general policy may be laid down for a whole group of newspapers by General Headquarters as in the matter of giving support to this or that side in a national election. A certain uniformity of policy, indeed, would be imposed on a newspaper chain by the special type of public to which it addresses itself—businessmen, lower middle class, the plain people. Even here it is at bottom not a question of leadership. When a newspaper chain has chosen its public it has virtually embraced that public's opinions and outlook.

Not far different is the case of the journalist who writes for a large number of newspapers. We speak of his great following. Actually he does not as a rule command his following but is commanded by it. There are times when one might say that instead of a following of so many million readers he really has so many million readers to follow. More or less consciously the conflicting views of such a large and diverse public extort recognition from the writer. It may show itself in a more philosophical attitude, in a tendency to see both sides of a question. The lower type of writer deliberately makes it his mission to be found on every possible side of every question in the course of not too many days. Under pressure from a large following it becomes feasible to maintain that Napoleon and Socrates were one greater than the other in the course of less than a week. If our writer happens to count humor as part of his equipment it becomes all the easier for him to be the friend of every man and every cause. He will find that every member of Congress is a real man though Congress in the aggregate is a collection of predatory morons. Every policy of the Administration is fine in the special instance, though the general trend of an Administration is quite another matter. A journalist writing for a sufficiently large audience will not infrequently manage to reconcile a kind word for the Communist experiment in Soviet Russia with a great affection for the Republican party and Mr Herbert Hoover. The journalist with a big following is in danger of becoming as comprehensive in his sympathies as the editor of the advice column for lovers. A perplexed young woman writes that her suitor is heartily disliked by her mother. The advice editor urges this young woman to remember that love is the greatest thing in the world, but that her mother is the best friend she will ever have.

4

Newspapers have lost the savage party spirit which formerly characterized them. Thick-and-thin support of the party ticket and the party platform is much less common than it used to be. The obligation to be regular is much less lightly felt. This is primarily the reflection of a change in the rigidity of party lines among people at large. The beginning was more than half a century ago in the mugwump secession from the Republican party which resulted in the election of Grover Cleveland in 1884. A dozen years later the emergence of William J. Bryan made it the turn of the Democrats to split. Thereafter great cleavages and secessions became a normal feature of our politics—Theodore Roosevelt, Robert M. La Follette, Alfred E. Smith and the Republican collapse of 1932. Against tidal waves of public sentiment the press has never been able to prevail. But beyond this the sweep of such mighty currents back and forth is bound to wear off the sharper edges of partisanship in the newspapers. As the Democratic party begins to win national elections with impressive frequency it gains respectability and prestige. It draws to itself newspaper support just as any winning cause attracts followers from the great neutral mass that always rallies to the support of the victor.

One factor which encourages newspaper independence in this country is the dual character of our government as between Federal and state rule; one might even call it a threefold division by including municipal government. A citizen may be Republican or Democrat in national elections and vote the other way in state elections. Much more common is the independent voter in municipal elections. Misgovernment in the cities has regularly been fought by fusion movements, of which the effect cannot help showing to some extent in state and Federal voting habits.

This basic truth about the press, that it mirrors rather than molds, disseminates rather than creates, should mitigate one danger frequently stressed in discussions of recent newspaper trends. That is the decline of local competition in the urban press. Since the beginning of the century there has been a steady increase in the number of cities dependent on a single newspaper. There were three hundred and fifty-three such one-paper towns in the year 1900. There were nine hundred and thirteen in the year 1930. The principal reason had been, of course, the great increase in the cost of running a newspaper, due primarily to higher demands by the reading public. The process was greatly accelerated by the World War which brought a sharp rise in the cost of white paper and in wages

and an exacting demand for expensive news contents. Between 1910 and 1920 the number of one-paper towns increased by one hundred and eighty. Between 1920 and 1930 the increase was two hundred and twenty-five, and this in a decade of great prosperity which normally should have encouraged newspaper enterprise.

Yet it does not follow, as many people have feared, that a community dependent on a single newspaper is exposed to the menace of colored news and partisan editorial comment. On the contrary, a newspaper which has a monopoly in its community is in a position to exercise greater independence. It does not have to steer its course with an eye on a rival. It can stand out more resolutely against the political powers in the community. It is less subject to intimidation by its advertisers. But above all we come back to the argument that as the readers of a newspaper increase it is bound to reflect the interests of that larger public. It has more followers to follow.

Obviously the other danger exists. A noncompetitive newspaper in a large community may sell out to the evil powers or may become the instrument of its owner's misguided opinions or ambitions. But, after all, the proof is in the actual record; and here we find that independent journalism has made a notable advance during this same period, now going on towards half a century, in which newspaper consolidations have cut down local competition and brought nation-wide newspaper aggregations under single control. If it is the mission of a newspaper to give the public what it wants—and in practice the journalistic industry subscribes to that doctrine—then it is plain that the newspaper which wants to please everybody in the community will be more broad-minded than the newspaper with a less inclusive public. A great newspaper is not a leader but a spokesman. When the statesmen in Washington defer to the owner of a great newspaper and seek his "support" they have primarily in mind not the support of the newspaper's editorial columns but of free access to its news columns. The public man will not despise an advocate of course, but chiefly he wants an opportunity to reach the newspaper's great body of readers by having his acts recorded and his speeches quoted as fully as may be.

The case of the New York *World* offers ample proof that the power exercised by a great newspaper derives not from its own initiative but from the degree to which it identifies itself with the march of events. The *World* was a crusading newspaper in the sense that it was always setting in motion campaigns, both editorially and in its news columns, in the political, social and economic sphere. Yet it cannot be said that this newspaper with its admirable editorial page could point to any large instance

in which it had imposed itself on events in the city of New York or in the nation. In common with all other respectable New York newspapers it fought the Tammany system without success, except as periodically the cup of Tammany iniquity was filled to overflowing and the gang was cast into the outer dark by a popular upheaval. The ardent support of the *World* did not avail to carry New York State for Woodrow Wilson in the razor-edge election of 1916, and its sustained assault on Prohibition from the beginning in 1920 to the day of its own demise in 1931 did not bring victory to the cause. It is irony on the surface of things that the *World* should have perished as the result of a business depression which brought success to many of the causes for which it had fought, and almost on the eve of victory as embodied in the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932. If the economic crisis which impelled the heirs of Joseph Pulitzer to abandon the *World* had not descended on the country Prohibition would have remained impregnable and the Democratic party would have continued to wander in the wilderness. Only four years separated the overwhelming defeat of Repeal and Alfred E. Smith in 1928 from the overwhelming victory of Repeal and Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932. If the country had remained prosperous after 1929 the New York *World* would have lived but its causes would have remained lost causes.

Much more readily than in politics the American people will accept original leadership in literature and art, in social theory, even in economic theory if this does not intrude too intimately on realities. We are much more ready to have our ideas shaped for us by others because we do not relate ideas too closely to life. In the decade between the Armistice and the great economic collapse of 1929 the country patronized the rebels in literature and art but lived its life with Presidents Harding and Coolidge. The intellectualist onslaught on Main Street and Babbitt was hailed with enormous applause by a nation which gave itself up passionately to the spirit of Main Street and Babbitt. It was Main Street which in the Presidential election of 1928 overwhelmed Alfred E. Smith; and it was Babbitt who marched forward with cheerful confidence to the dazzling peak of the 1929 stock market.

We have, then, the piquant fact that the American people will follow the leadership of the press in intellectual matters because, to put it quite bluntly, we do not take matters of the intellect very seriously. The people will not accept leadership from the press in its politics and its economics, but imposes its own views upon the press, because these are matters of personal and intimate experience in which the everyday man does not need to be told. Outside of the scope of its own first-hand knowledge and its basic interests, the American people will defer to

expert opinion, and all the more readily because, as we have just said, general ideas with us are not too closely connected with the basic way of life. That is why in the years since the Armistice so many book-review columns in the daily press have been radical where the rest of the paper has been conservative; this is true not only of fiction. We are not too greatly surprised to find the realism of William Faulkner and Erskine Caldwell applauded in the literary columns of conservative newspapers whose editorial pages sharply reject the Faulkner-Caldwell picture of life in the United States. The novelist, after all, must be given the run of the world he creates. But in serious books, too, dealing with major problems of the day, the literary columns have enjoyed an extraordinary degree of liberty. We find them bringing to bear against existing social and economic institutions a sustained fire of criticism which in all consistency should give pain to the conservative writers on the editorial page. This is a compliment to the tolerance of the American press, but there may also be the feeling that it does not greatly matter if the literary editor does take it on himself to dispose of the capitalist system every little while. After all it is only a book.

5

Exaggerated notions of the power of the press, in the sense of press domination of public opinion, have been fostered by the advent of the oral newspaper which is radio. The microphone, because of its novelty, because of its inherent qualities, tends to become in people's minds mightier than the editor's pen. The radio speaker's following becomes synonymous with his listeners. It is a belief encouraged by the fact that the emergence of radio as a phenomenon of our time has coincided with the emergence of dictatorship, and the broadcast is the autocrat's favorite medium of expression. We do not always stop to recall that the dictator's power over his people is by no means wholly due to the spell of his voice over the radio. In very large measure it is due to the absence of competition. In the unfree states there are no opposition radios.

This is one of several reasons why the heads of nations and the leaders of popular movements may well prefer the radio to the newspaper press, even when it is a controlled press. The broadcast is swifter than print in reaching its audience. The radio speech undeniably gains in effectiveness when every listener feels himself part of a mighty congregation. He may sit in his armchair at home and yet catch the infection and blaze of the mass meeting. A half-million copies of the same morning newspaper will be read by successive audiences over a stretch of several hours. The city

subways carry a seven o'clock crowd, an eight o'clock crowd, a nine o'clock crowd, all reading their newspaper. A radio address reaches a multitude simultaneously.

The printed word in our Western civilization is five hundred years old. The newspaper is two hundred and fifty years old. A knowledge of reading in our advanced Western nations may be called, for all practical purposes, universal. Nevertheless the average man would rather listen than read. The great majority of people are still a bit awkward, not to say humanly lazy, in the presence of the printed word. The average amount of time devoted to reading newspapers in the United States is measured in quarters of an hour, and this even among educated men and men of affairs. The time spent in reading serious books is equally modest. Much more time is devoted to magazines, but it is chiefly the gossip magazines; as in fact the most popular features of the enormously circulated tabloid newspapers are their gossip columns. In other words, people read most gladly the sort of thing in print which nearest approaches chat. The radio speech, even when it comes to them from their President of the United States, takes on a touch of informality, of intimacy, which the printed speech in the paper next day cannot wholly retain. In the authoritarian states of Europe the radio address, even on momentous occasions, loses something of the character of the pronunciamiento and takes on a suggestion of the familiar talk between man and man. The radio softens the relationship of master and servant into something like the relationship between teacher and pupil, between father and child. A father does not issue bulletins to his children as Napoleon did to his armies, or write editorials for them to peruse, or go on record for their benefit by having himself interviewed for the news columns. A father talks things over with his children, and that no doubt is the effect sought by the European dictators in talking to their peoples over the radio; they are fathers, guides and friends and not masters. The loving father does not allow anyone to intervene between him and his children. He addresses them directly.

But there is one vital difference between a father addressing his children and a chief of state addressing his people by radio. At home the children take part in the discussion. There may still be old-fashioned fathers who will not brook contradiction, but they will tolerate a question, a point of information, if not a point of order. The head of a nation addressing his people over the radio is obviously exempt from heckling, from questions from the floor, from awkward demonstrations of any kind. He can develop his argument in precise accordance with plan. He can work out every calculated effect in word and tone without fear of interruption. He

is exempt from the sort of interruption to which his printed speech in the newspaper is exposed. The man who reads a speech in the newspaper is free to pause where he pleases in order to weigh a point. He can go back to an earlier paragraph for a suspected contradiction of statement, for a lapse in logic. He can pause and ponder. The radio listener is not allowed to pause and reflect. He is completely passive. He is subordinated to the speaker's schedule. He has no time to stop and think.

That is what men in office usually mean by what they call the direct appeal of the radio. In democracies where a free press exists officials sometimes go directly to the people over the heads of reporters who misquote them and editors who misinterpret them and perhaps even proof-readers who misprint; but most often public men who laud the direct appeal of the radio mean thereby immunity from debate and colloquy and comment in the listener's own mind. They want passivity, complete acquiescence. They want no opposition.

In this lies the menace of radio for free thought and free institutions. It is regrettable that in recent years many Liberals have been betrayed by calculations of expediency into a certain cavalier attitude to the newspapers. Because a majority of American newspapers opposed President Roosevelt in the 1936 election and continued to oppose his more drastic New Deal policies it would have been quite in order for Mr Roosevelt's supporters to have their laugh at the alleged power of the press by pointing to the 1936 election figures. Actually the Roosevelt extremists paid undue tribute to the power of the press when they proceeded to argue that the newspapers are controlled by rich men hostile to social justice and national reconstruction. That being the case, it became a popular thesis in official Washington, though possibly in its less responsible sections, that the radio is the only great instrument of economic emancipation, because over the radio a Liberal leadership can go directly to the people over the heads of the newspaper proprietors, their reporters and their editors.

It is a shortsighted Liberalism that would exalt the radio over the press. To do so is to overlook the fact that Fascism, the archenemy of Liberalism, has exactly the same feeling about the press. Because for the moment Liberals see a President of their own faith confronted with a strong press opposition, they forget that radio is a much more costly instrument of communication than the printed word and for that reason radio is much more likely to fall under capitalist control. Radio is far less accessible to a minority with meager financial resources. The press is in part no doubt the great metropolitan newspaper representing an investment of many millions. But the press is also the poorly printed

four-page newspaper run off on a creaky foot press in a cellar. The press may be nothing more than a pamphlet, even as many pioneers of the press were pamphleteers, like Daniel Defoe. The press may actually be a mere circular or broadside. The press is a hundred copies of Nikolai Lenin's newspaper, long before the World War, printed on tissue paper and smuggled into Czarist Russia inside the lining of a handbag—the so-called "satchel literature." The greatest of all examples of the militant printed word, the Bible, has been read in stately folios from cathedral lecterns, but men have read it, too, in proscribed pocket editions. The printed message which can be set up in garrets or cellars and which can be read furtively in garrets and cellars seems destined to remain the main defense of suppressed minorities and of struggling causes.

6

There was a time when the existence of numerous daily journals and periodicals in other languages than English was regarded with concern as proof of a very large unassimilated element in our population. Anxiety on the point is not so acute as in the days when unrestricted immigration continued to feed this foreign-language reservoir. The question does, however, recur from time to time, and may yet assume importance in discussions of the American spirit versus the foreign "isms."

If we assume that the reading of newspapers begins at the age of fifteen we find that the foreign-born whites of that age in the last census were fifteen per cent of the nation's potential newspaper public. The number of foreign-language newspapers and weekly publications was between five and six per cent of our whole newspaper circulation. Roughly speaking, seventy million native-born whites over the age of fifteen consumed thirty-eight million copies of the daily paper and thirteen million foreign-born whites consumed two million copies. It was one English-language newspaper for every two native-born potential readers and one foreign-language newspaper for every six foreign-born potential readers. If we think of the press as a molding force for Americanism or against it the backward pull of the foreign-language press is at once seen to be much less formidable than is usually supposed; it is pull exerted on only one in every six foreign-born adults.

Actually the effective pull against assimilation is much smaller. No doubt it is an imperfect American citizen, by the one-hundred-per-cent test, who continues to read his Yiddish newspaper or his Italian, Hungarian, Greek or Slavic newspaper instead of reading a paper in the language of the country. But the language in which a newspaper is

printed is not the sole test. The foreign-language newspaper may be in spite of its vernacular an American newspaper in spirit and its major contents. Thus, among New York newspapers the Jewish *Daily Forward* is printed in the Yiddish language, and *Atlantis* tells its story in Greek and *Il Progresso Americano* in Italian; but they are American dailies in the bulk of their news and still more so in their method of presenting the news, in their special features, in make-up. The *Daily Forward* is largely a Yiddish version of Mr Hearst's *Evening Journal* upon which it was originally modeled. The blazing headlines, the "human interest," the pictures, the serial novels, and above all the columns of heart-to-heart talk between editor and reader, the departments of advice for the love-lorn, for the housewife, for the mother—these things are American journalism. The same in varying degree is true of *Atlantis* and *Il Progresso*. Every foreign-language paper will naturally show the character of its special ethnic group, but the dominant character is American. In spirit and manner one of our Italian or Slavic newspapers is in most essentials far removed from the Milan or Warsaw newspaper in its own tongue in the homeland and closely related to the English-language newspaper on the same newsstand in New York or Chicago. That resemblance becomes still closer when we take into account the advertising pages, a section of the newspaper that must never be overlooked. The foreign-born reader of the Yiddish or Italian paper may have retained much of his native cast of mind and may even move in a world of ideas conditioned by his Old World origins. The advertising pages in his New York paper show him living in a world teeming with American clothes, furniture, automobiles, radios, washing machines, toilet articles, breakfast foods, motion pictures, summer resorts and West Indian cruises. A combination of words in the Jewish newspaper, set down in the same alphabet as the original Psalms and Isaiah, may turn out, when spoken aloud, to be Four-Door Sedan. A two-word phrase in the same characters as the *Iliad* and looking as if it might be a battle cry around Troy may conceivably be Bran Muffins. On the New York subway the passengers bend over German or Italian or Yiddish newspapers but they are not always absorbed in the news from Germany or the news from Palestine. It may be a bit of intimate gossip from Hollywood or a serial novel dealing with international spies on the Bund in Shanghai.

Accuracy in our newspapers is more strongly emphasized in small things than in great. The humblest item of police news will be careful

to specify William B. Smith, 27, of 182 West Two Hundred and Thirty-fifth Street, who was run down by a taxicab in front of 2143 Third Avenue, the Bronx and taken to Lebanon Hospital with a broken leg. This habit of citing the full name, age and residence will appear in wholly unimportant items from remote places, though it is a question whether the exact age and address of William B. Smith is essential to the brief account of his misfortune. The reason for this precision of statement is no doubt to be found in the fact that so much of our news is actually police news and that it originates in the police "blotter."

Yet the same news editor who will insist on complete accuracy in names, places and times will be less exigent in what some would consider the higher values of a news story. Our news editor will pass without demur a statement from his Washington correspondent that it is estimated that a certain popular "radio priest" will sway five million votes in the forthcoming Presidential election. The editor as a man may be skeptical of so vast a following, but as long as someone in Washington has quoted five million followers, journalistic ethics permit the editor to say five million followers, with the safeguard that it is so stated or it is so estimated. When the city police or the United States Secret Service runs down a gang of narcotic smugglers or counterfeiters or, in the recent past, rum runners, the value of the booty is always estimated at its full retail price in the hands of the ultimate consumer, although the news editor as a man of the world knows that an outlawed commodity in a large-scale transaction probably sells for one fifth to one tenth of the retail price. The editor who will be at pains to ascertain whether the victim in a taxi accident spells his name Kelly or Kelley will readily estimate the annual value of America's illicit traffic at fifty million dollars when it is probably five million dollars; yet the real size of the drug traffic has far more social import than an extra ϵ in the name of the man who was run over by an automobile. News editors will say that the police estimate the value of the stolen jewels at one million dollars and will then proceed to list separate gems to a total value of seventy-five thousand dollars and take the rest for granted. They will estimate the profits of a labor-union racketeer at a million dollars a year. This sum is obtained by adding up ascertainable items for a total of one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars and accounting for the balance of the million dollars by sundries.

At its height this indifference to arithmetical probability will express itself in the fabulous mathematics of foreign correspondents reporting the triumphs of revolutionary regimes in Nazi Germany, in Fascist Italy, in the Soviet Union. These figures are so frequently official figures and

claims—no others being tolerated—that it presumably does not behoove the news editor at this end of the wire to go behind the returns. An easy credulity in the face of figures which considers it just as likely that a trunkful of smuggled opium may be worth two million dollars as twenty thousand dollars has prepared us for the government-manufactured statistics of the totalitarian press bureaus. The pity is that such dream figures and claims from Germany or Italy or Russia have influenced ideas and opinion in America to a manner that an exaggerated narcotic shipment can hardly be expected to do. This lack of critical judgment in the field of international news will sometimes manifest itself in the highest type of newspaper which errs little in other respects.

A newspaperman in quest of standard information will much rather ask people than look things up for himself in a reference book or an atlas. Behind this trait is a sound news instinct which is aware that people are much better news than encyclopedias. The reader will show little interest in the statement that China has a population of four hundred and fifty million souls according to the *World Almanac*. It is a dull and academic item and might very well be written by somebody who never was within five thousand miles of China. It is news when China's population is estimated at four hundred and fifty million by a tourist just arrived from the Far East. As a rule our tourist's figures are not wholly authentic; or if his information is correct he is as like as not to have got his figures from the same reference book that stands at the reporter's elbow. It is the basic virtue of news gathering carried to a ridiculous excess. News is reported by men who have seen and heard, by the man on the spot; but we know human fallibility and human pretension. The man may have been on the spot without seeing or understanding, yet the greatest authority in the world on China can scarcely hope to vie in news value with the man who has just come from there. The man on the spot will be listened to, though his observations are perfunctory and his qualifications negligible. The young schoolteacher back from ten days in Soviet Russia has greater value for the news columns than the professor of Russian history at the big State University who has stayed at home and read everything that has been written about Russia.

8

An outstanding trait of our modern temper is the capacity for being astonished by what we have always known. We have spoken elsewhere of the technological panic which beset many of our people at the depth of the business depression, coinciding roughly with the beginning of

Franklin D. Roosevelt's first term in the White House. The problem of human labor displaced by the machine was brought before the country in an apocalyptic spirit, as though Watt and Arkwright had just patented their inventions, as though the Luddites had never smashed machines a hundred and twenty years ago, as though Thomas Carlyle had not written on the subject a hundred years ago, as though Speaker Carlisle of our House of Representatives in July 1888, in closing the debate on the Mills low-tariff bill, had not described the enormous increase in production wrought by the machine in the preceding seventy-five years. In the face of this long history we have not even today wholly emerged from the 1932 panic over technological unemployment.

A similar phenomenon is our very recent rediscovery of the Masses. Inevitably popular excitement over mass production, mass education, mass behavior and control would sooner or later touch the subject of the masses and the press. The head of our leading school of journalism speaks of the duty resting upon university research to remember the need of distributing knowledge to a "universal audience." He quotes with approval the chief news editor of the British National Broadcasting Company who writes:

For good or evil mass production of ideas and information is going to be one of the features of the world's mental and spiritual life, just as mass production in industry is one of the features of its economic life.

At first glance this warning would more closely affect the press than any other province of our national life. We live in the age of the tabloid newspaper with its vast circulation. We see many of the standard-size newspapers give over the greater part of their space to pictures, mammoth headlines, scandal, crime, prize contests, puzzles and columns of gossip about the life and loves of motion-picture stars and bandleaders. When this obvious mass journalism coincides with a nation-wide campaign to unionize the mass industries it is an irresistible temptation to say that of course the two things go together. Thinking as well as working must henceforth be on the mass scale. We face a revolution in the nation's life.

Yet it is nothing less than extraordinary that people should be so overwhelmed by the new thing called tabloid journalism as to forget the old thing called Yellow Journalism. Technically the yellow press is now getting on to its fiftieth anniversary; unless indeed we shall see later on that it has really passed its hundredth anniversary. In any event it is more than forty years since the great war began between Joseph Pulitzer's New York *World* and the newcomer, William R. Hearst's *Evening*

Journal. Before the conflict came to a close it had made a large section of our press safe for vulgarity, sensationalism, sex exploitation and nearly all the other aberrations and excesses that we now call tabloid. No tabloid newspaper has ventured to use headlines as big as those employed by the afore-mentioned rivals during the Spanish-American War. The tabloid columns of gossip and the fiction serials hardly plumb the depths reached in the Sunday "features" of forty years ago. It is odd to have mass journalism described as a new thing nearly half a century after the Yellow Kid cartoon that gave its name to a whole system of journalism. If ever the press was being brought down to the level of the masses it was in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the decade of which our own generation has been invited to think as a mild pale pink epoch. One need only read in the history of American journalism how men shook their heads over the temerity of the young publisher, Adolph S. Ochs, who in that same epochal year 1896 bought the moribund New York *Times* and set himself to build a conservative newspaper at a time when the future of American journalism seemed to be wedded to Yellow Journalism.

It is a similar case when our British broadcasting editor speaks in 1937 of mass production of ideas. He has apparently forgotten Alfred Harmsworth, later Lord Northcliffe, who in this same year 1896 which saw the debut of William R. Hearst established the London *Daily Mail* as a ha'penny paper and so founded the New Journalism in Britain. If Hearst had a Spanish-American War to give him a magnificent start Harmsworth had a Boer War. Before it was over the *Daily Mail* had six hundred thousand circulation. Before the World War was over newspaper circulations of two million were common in London. What people in Great Britain a generation ago said about the Stunt Press, with its pictures, its sensations, its clamors, its insurance prizes, its bonuses, is a matter of record.

We are bound to insist, then, in this supposed emergence of the masses in the field of ideas, that their real entrance on the stage took place long ago, just as the factory machine came very long ago. And as in the case of the machine the shock must have been much more violent when the people advanced from no schools to schools a hundred years ago, than in our own time when they advance from lower schools to high schools and colleges. Fear of the vulgarization of learning by the flooding of the colleges is very much a priori. It is true that many young people now go to college who are not college material; but the majority of college men in all ages have been indifferent students or idlers. When Isaac Newton was a sizar in Cambridge University three hundred years ago

the rich men's sons took their studies very lightly, and Cambridge was the more serious of the two sister universities.

When a reduction in the newspaper tax from fourpence to a penny made newspapers accessible to plain people a hundred years ago in England the vulgarization of the press must have been much more abrupt than later under Lord Northcliffe. In this country the mass influence must have been more sharply felt in 1833 when Ben Day established in New York the penny *Sun*, dedicated to hoax and scandal, than the mass influence in the tabloids today. Within the same three or four years the July Revolution on the Continent, the Reform Bill in England and here at home the Jacksonian revolution signalized the arrival of the masses on the stage of modern history more than a century ago. To say that there is a difference between their arrival and their triumph is not to dispose of the problem. We are dealing now with the realm of ideas and we know that ideas in the time of Thomas Carlyle, the young Disraeli and Ben Day of the New York *Sun* were acutely aware of the masses. People were certainly aware of the masses a generation later in England when the franchise bill of 1867 established manhood suffrage and the Conservative spokesman Lowe said, "We must now establish schools to educate our masters."

The real threat of mass production in ideas, of vulgarization, besets us not from the masses but from the classes. The menace to individual thinking is not in forty million people reading the newspapers where only twenty million people used to read them thirty years ago; even twenty million readers are very much the masses. The real danger comes when a middle class begins to think in the mass. Radio ministering to an audience of fifty million listeners is not apt to grow much less intellectual than when it appealed to thirty million listeners. The smaller number is big enough to have reached the level of the average man, and the millions of newcomers can hardly change that level. It is a much more serious business when the two or three million best-educated and most prosperous people in the country are welded into a mass by technology or fashion, lose individuality and in their mental life tend to become a herd. They remain far above the tabloid level but they are too easily regimented by the newspaper, the radio, the book club and the country club. It is not the mass life of a hundred and thirty million people that imposes itself most heavily on our personality. One can think for and about and with the masses and yet remain one's self. The great menace to the free mind does not come from a hundred and thirty million countrymen but from a few hundred relatives, friends, acquaintances and business associates.

9

Strained relations between Charles E. Lindbergh and the newspaper profession grew more manifest as that first dazzling ocean flight of 1927 retreated into the past. Reporters and editors came to suspect and resent his aloofness. They would not or could not understand his wish to be let alone. Some were inclined to regard it as Colonel Lindbergh's technique for stimulating publicity, but a technique which made the life of the pursuing newspapermen arduous and uncertain. In any event such behavior would amount to rank ingratitude. The famous colonel was guilty of biting the hand that fed him. It was the newspapermen who had made him; so the argument ran.

It is an argument that betrays a characteristic arrogance in the newspaper profession which has always been tempted to exaggerate its own role in the making of fame. That its authentic role is an important one cannot of course be denied. Every newspaperman has had sufficient experience of reputations that feed on publicity, of popular successes that have been made by the reporters, of not a few genuine careers that had their start in a lucky piece of news. But the American reporter is as susceptible as the rest of his countrymen to current phrases and dogmas, and among the latter is the power of propaganda as we have discussed it elsewhere. Because the newspaperman has unquestionably seen reputations and careers built up with the aid of a clever press agency he too often takes the position that everything is a "build-up." There is nothing which cannot be built up by expending enough labor and money on publicity. What the newspaperman will not always recognize is that there are many instances of publicity in which the individual compels publicity; and Colonel Lindbergh was obviously one of these. Because millions of words were written about him in the newspapers it does not mean that the newspapers built him up. Lindbergh forced them to build him up. After that first solo flight across the Atlantic the man Lindbergh held the newspapers in the hollow of his hand, and there was no ingratitude in his condescension to the reporters if it was condescension. It is arguable that he did more for the reporters than they did for him. As one of the rare persons who are always news, always "copy," he was a source of livelihood to journalists everywhere.

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CHAPTER XIX

Political Habits

WE CHOOSE for our point of departure the congressional and state elections of November 8, 1938, and we begin by recalling to the reader's mind a paradoxical statement that occurs in our chapter on the American press. It was there asserted that the most important class of news in our newspapers is the news that is not new. The principal contents of a newspaper, the subjects to which the newspaper reader most eagerly turns day after day, are not concerned with the extraordinary but with the normal, not with the unexpected but with the expected. People are chiefly interested in the latest daily installment of a routine chronicle.

The mid-term elections of 1938 have just this significance for the student of the American record over a period of one hundred and fifty years. The elections served notice on a startled nation that this was still the same nation. The announcement fell with equal force on the astonished ears of Republican winners and of Democratic losers. We have had in our history national elections that were turning points. The very high significance of the 1938 elections is that they marked no turning point in the long national perspective. If we assume that the American people that day was standing, in the customary phrase, at the crossroads, then it became clear when the votes were counted that the nation had chosen to make no sharp turn, right or left, away from its traditional behavior. The impressive news about the elections, we might go so far as to say the sensational news, was that there was no parting of the ways.

This is said wholly without reference to subsequent events. Our mid-term Congressional elections have their chief popular interest as a forecast of the Presidential election two years later. But while there was no discounting the significance of the 1938 elections from this traditional

standpoint, it could be truly said that the chief importance of the voting did not lie in the future. The verdict was already spread on the record. It was a secondary consideration whether the Republican tide of 1938, which doubled that party's strength in Congress and swept it to wholly unexpected victory in many states, would continue to mount until it washed the Democratic party out of the White House in 1940. The really momentous fact was that this possibility of Republican victory in 1940 should have become overnight a subject of serious discussion. Before the votes were counted in the 1938 election the chances of Republican victory in 1940 were a theme for the humorists. Serious observers were more immediately concerned with the question whether there would be such a thing as a Republican party after 1940. It measures the change wrought in the whole political outlook, in the national atmosphere, to recall that before the 1938 elections people were wondering how long our two-party system might be expected to endure. After the elections people were arguing that with the Solid South and New York and California and the rest of our traditional arithmetic the Democratic party still had a lead over the Republican party in the Electoral College. Compared with the fact that people were once more calculating Presidential victories by fairly narrow margins, it was of minor importance who would actually win in 1940. It was already determined that the election would be won by either the Democrats or the Republicans, that is to say, by one of the two American parties that had been winning or losing national elections under these names over a period of eighty-four years, counting from the birth of the Republican party in 1854.

To say this is to say that the 1938 elections overthrew at a single stroke a whole new edifice of doctrine and speculation relating to the political behavior of the American people. This new body of thought had grown up in the half-dozen years that elapsed since the dazzling Roosevelt victory of 1932. It was part of the general theory of a new epoch in American life, of unprecedented experiences, of submerged landmarks and of a present and future sharply cut off from the American past by the economic collapse of 1929 and the thundering Roosevelt majorities which that collapse produced. It became the basic assumption of this doctrine that America was a slate wiped clean by the storms of the recent past and that the new record was sure to be written in bold characters spelling out a revolutionary message. One of the new chapters would deal with the breakup of the existing political parties, our present hybrid organizations to be succeeded by a severely logical division of the country into conservatives and liberals. A step towards that desirable end might be the emergence of a third party based on principle and thus standing

in sharp contrast to the present heterogeneous mixtures and compromises that went by the name of Democrats and Republicans. To the standards of this new third party would repair all good men who had given up hope of seeing the two major parties reconstitute themselves on the basis of a clean-cut definition of principles and material interests. Whether the two existing parties made themselves over under pressure from a third party or under the general pressure of events, it was a cherished belief that the change was inevitable.

But it was not inevitable. Even as discussion busied itself with a new national delimitation of party frontiers the country was moving in precisely the opposite direction, away from the third-party idea and towards the old system of compromise and alliance within the framework of the two major parties. There had been functioning in the country since the beginning of the century a national third party, of no transcendent numerical importance perhaps, but polling a respectable number of votes and conspicuous by the very fact that it possessed a sharply defined body of doctrine. This was the Socialist party. It was significant, then, that immediately after the first great Roosevelt victory in 1932 the Socialist party entered on a rapid decline. It had polled not far from a million votes in this 1932 election; four years later it cast less than two hundred thousand votes. Socialist voters in the great majority rallied directly to the Democratic party or, in New York State and particularly in New York City, became the nucleus of a new American Labor party which almost invariably supported the Democratic candidates and always the major candidates. Political theorists were challenging the two major parties to equip themselves with a new set of consistent principles and standards or face the risk of a powerful third party so conceived and so dedicated; and all the while our only permanent third party was fading from the scene. Socialists were entering into alliance with Democrats, occasionally with Republicans, and blurring party lines and party principles worse than ever.

The process had been under way for half a dozen years unobserved or little stressed when the 1938 elections brought it into the open. One might say that overnight the political climate changed. The question of a third party and particularly of a Farmer-Labor party lost all actuality. There emerged the clear promise of a Democratic party more conservative than at any time since 1932, and a Republican party more liberal than before the debacle of 1932. In other words, instead of drifting apart into a "logical" arrangement of conservatives and liberals, the two major parties gave every sign of coming nearer together. The old heterogeneous irrational party alignments were reaffirmed.

2

Still another ancient political habit which emerged from the 1938 elections in astonishingly good health was state prestige and state loyalty. Even before the advent of the New Deal many students of American politics were at pains to point out that our two major parties were not truly national. They were confederations of state and local parties and machines more or less closely articulated. The description would be particularly true of the Democratic party with its two main centers of strength in the agricultural South and in the great industrial cities of the North. This view of the parties as aggregations of state interests rather than national organisms fell in with the general drift of the thought of the time away from the states and to centralized or co-ordinated authority in Washington. From this standpoint the states were outworn survivals of a primitive horse-and-buggy age. They could not but operate as a drag on progress in a nation integrated by mass production, Big Business and the sciences which annihilated space and time. Among ardent supporters of President Roosevelt it became a habit to speak of the states as strongholds of reaction; and it was a charge seemingly corroborated by Mr Roosevelt's opponents when they emphasized the role of the states as the main defense of the old American system against the encroachments of centralized authority and the threat of personal government.

This is a debate as old as the United States Constitution, and in the rhythm of our national story the fortunes of battle have swung from the states to Washington and back again. In the years after 1932 men came to believe that the decline of the states was something more than the regular swing of the pendulum. We were invited to think of the nation as once for all turning its back on an instrument of government that had outlived its usefulness. Political thinking and governmental action were like the dust storms of the High Plains of which President Roosevelt said that they had no regard for state lines. The transition might be direct from state thinking to national thinking, or move more gradually by way of regional thinking, but it was away from the states.

The obliteration of the forty-eight states in the scheme of our national life, the virtual abandonment of the theory of a Federal Union in favor of a centralized nation, received its quietus in the 1938 elections, along with the new philosophies of party organization. In the overnight change of climate, a change back to an older climate of political thinking and feeling, the states ceased to be obsolescent institutions, even as the Repub-

lican party suddenly ceased to be moribund and our illogical party system ceased to be marked for destruction. For that matter the revived prestige of the states was bound to go hand in hand with the renewed prestige of the two-party system. The electoral history of the preceding eighteen years, beginning with Republican victory in 1920, had tended strongly to throw the states into the background by ushering in an era of crushing electoral majorities.

In an era of landslides which engulf the whole country the individual state loses importance. Beginning with Warren G. Harding in 1920 the defeated party never carried more than a dozen states. The loser's score was down to eight states in 1928 with Alfred E. Smith, down to six states in 1932 with Herbert Hoover, and to the lonely eminence of Maine and Vermont with Alfred Landon in 1936. Because the 1936 election wrought such havoc among Republican governors as well as in Republican ranks at Washington, the impression of obliterated state lines was greatly reinforced. These thundering plebiscites were a far cry from the electoral battles of fifty years earlier when the Presidency swung back and forth every four years with the change of a few states. For that matter the nation seemed to have forgotten the 1916 election with victory determined by a few thousand votes in California.

The day after the 1938 elections both parties were back in full vigor. Back came the old arithmetic by which the Solid South with the Border States and one or two big industrial states gave us a Democratic victory, the arithmetic by which a ground swell in the Middle West and New England meant a Republican victory. Very plainly the states had come back. The whole aspect of the political scene at the end of 1938 was such as to permit us to study it as part of the long American record. We were not in a revolutionary era for which the nation's past was devoid of meaning.

3

It is a familiar indictment of American political behavior that our people do not vote for, but against. By this theory a crushing majority at the polls does not express a flaming enthusiasm. It is only an act of vengeance. Two classes of persons bring this charge against the popular mood on Election Day. The smaller number would comprise those critics who take a cynical view of the whole democratic process. The practice of voting against somebody instead of for somebody would be just what one might expect of the mob, with its native aversion for what is fine and bold, with its native affection for the common and the low. This school of folk psychology finds the basic trait of the masses to con-

sist in a rancorous envy and malice. The mob loves to smite the head that rises above the crowd. The mob, like Death, loves a shining mark.

There are other observers, and they are far more numerous, who hold no such bitter views about their fellow men operating within the democratic framework, but who nevertheless deplore the prevalent habit of voting against. Such friendly judges feel for this practice the strong distaste which the great majority of their countrymen entertain, in theory at least, for negative criticism. To vote for is to act. To vote against is to behave like a destructive critic.

The accusation in itself, on the surface of things, is true. Most of our popular elections will be found to be in the nature of protests rather than affirmations. The majorities are much more often against a state of things than for a state of things. What is not true is that the American people, in so voting against men and things, is a mob actuated by envy and malice or even a crowd indulging in destructive criticism. On the contrary, we may go so far as to say that to vote against, instead of voting for, is to act in consonance with the intentions of the men who founded the nation and wrote the Federal Constitution.

What, for instance, is meant by a government of checks and balances, such as this Government is proudly affirmed to be? What does it mean when we say that this is a government of laws and not of men? A law is a restriction, a declaration against. A government of checks and balances is a government in which one of the three co-ordinate parts is designed to act as a restraint on the other two. It is against the other two. The authors of the Constitution did not consider it necessary to encourage the Executive, the Legislative and the Judiciary to assert themselves. The authors of the Constitution knew enough of human nature to take it for granted that Executive, Legislative and Judiciary might be trusted to try to annex as much power as they could manage to lay hands on. The great need, as the men of 1787 saw it, was to make provision against inevitable attempts at aggrandizement by any one of the co-ordinate branches of government at the expense of the other two.

There is another way of stating this issue of people voting for and against. It may be put in the form of a question. Which is true—that great leaders produce large popular majorities, or that large popular majorities create great leaders? Does the man make the popular following or does the popular following make the man?

From our political history over a period of more than fifty years the answer emerges that votes make the leader. The popular following creates the man and not the man the following. In the course of fifty-odd years there are no less than four impressive cases bearing on this point.

All four cases, as it happens, come from New York State. They center around the careers of Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, Alfred E. Smith and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

What is the common view of how Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt achieved the Presidency, the leadership of a great and devoted following, and a shining place in history? It seems absurd to ask. It is a commonplace that the two men, Cleveland and Roosevelt, carved out their careers by sheer force of personality. Men of rugged will or of fiery will, they gathered about them a body of admirers which in time came to embrace a majority of the nation. But this interpretation is false in the case of both men.

Neither Grover Cleveland nor Theodore Roosevelt created an army of followers by sheer force of personality. The army appeared first and, looking about for a leader, chose as nearest to hand Grover Cleveland and twenty years later Theodore Roosevelt. The two men did not come originally into power because a majority of the American people voted for them. They came into power as the result of a majority of the people voting against somebody else. Here the argument demands a few election figures with which, we trust, the reader will be patient. They are vital evidence.

Party majorities in New York State between 1872 and 1880 ranged from fifty-four thousand down to twenty-one thousand. The earlier figure is the one by which General Grant beat Horace Greeley, and the latter figure is the one by which James A. Garfield beat General Hancock. In 1876 Tilden beat Hayes by thirty-three thousand votes. In 1874 a Democratic governor was elected by fifty thousand votes. In 1880 a Republican governor was elected by forty-three thousand votes. Then came an eruption. Two years later Grover Cleveland was elected governor by a plurality of one hundred and ninety-three thousand votes. He had nearly two votes to every one cast for his Republican opponent. He had four times the normal plurality of recent years.

What sort of campaign did Grover Cleveland wage to score such a breath-taking plurality? He did not have to wage any campaign. His election was assured the moment he was nominated. In choosing Grover Cleveland to be their governor the people of New York voted not for but against. They voted for a man of known honesty and capacity to be sure, but they voted primarily against Republican misrule. Grover Cleveland was elected governor in 1882 as a Democrat by an enormous secession of Republican voters. The same thing had happened the previous year when Cleveland was elected mayor of Buffalo. The people of Buffalo voted against corruption and misrule.

In 1884 Grover Cleveland was nominated for the Presidency. The man who had been elected governor of New York by one hundred and ninety-three thousand plurality was the inevitable Democratic candidate for President at a time when New York made and unmade Presidents. Cleveland won the Presidency, the first Democrat since Buchanan in 1856, because the American people in 1884 voted against. They voted against the Republican nominee, James G. Blaine. Grover Cleveland was elected by a great secession from the Republicans.

In 1898 Theodore Roosevelt was elected governor of New York by 662,000 votes against 645,000 votes for his Democratic opponent. It was a plurality of seventeen thousand in a poll of more than 1,300,000 votes. Two years earlier William McKinley had carried the state by a plurality of 265,000 over William J. Bryan. Two years later McKinley carried the state over Bryan by 244,000 votes. In that election Theodore Roosevelt was chosen Vice-President. In 1901 President McKinley was assassinated and Theodore Roosevelt became President. In 1904 he was nominated to succeed himself. His opponent on the Democratic ticket was Alton B. Parker. Now in 1896 McKinley's plurality over Bryan in the nation was 567,000. In 1900 McKinley's plurality over Bryan in the nation was 862,000. But in 1904 the country woke on the day after the election to hear that Roosevelt had beaten Parker by 2,545,000 votes.

Such a plurality had never been known in the history of the country. Such overwhelming popular approval in terms of votes had never been recorded. To later generations it would seem that this stupendous Roosevelt plurality was only what one would expect. Theodore Roosevelt is one of the most magnetic figures in our history. Theodore Roosevelt, a flaming compound of energy and will and mind, in the course of two and a half years after Mr McKinley's death so impressed himself on the imagination of the country that the American people, in the 1904 election, rose to Theodore Roosevelt as it had not done to any leader before him. This would be the general belief today, but unfortunately the figures do not bear out the interpretation. That unprecedented plurality of more than two and a half million votes was not the American people voting for Theodore Roosevelt. It was an avalanche descending upon his opponent, Alton B. Parker. The figures are unanswerable. Theodore Roosevelt in 1904 received four hundred and nine thousand more votes than Mr McKinley in 1900. But the Democratic candidate in 1904 received 1,275,000 fewer votes than Mr Bryan in 1900.

The reason is familiar political history. Mr Bryan, after two tries for the Presidency, made way or was compelled to make way, for a representative of the conservative democracy of the East in 1904. Thereupon

the Bryan Democrats proceeded to take revenge for party "betrayal" in the two Bryan campaigns. The knives of Bryan Democrats, wielded against Mr Parker, accounted for three fourths of Theodore Roosevelt's immense plurality. But popular fame rarely chooses to go behind the returns. The simple fact stood forth that Theodore Roosevelt had received an unprecedented endorsement. It was a fact of which he was himself bound to take cognizance. Fate had stamped him a man of destiny. The great hold which Theodore Roosevelt won over his countrymen in the next decade was in large part his own work; but the start, and such a magnificent start, came from forces outside himself. Civil war in the Republican ranks made Grover Cleveland. Civil war in the Democratic ranks made Theodore Roosevelt.

In the case of Alfred E. Smith the proof is not so strong that majorities make the man instead of the man creating the majorities. More than with Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt the career of Alfred E. Smith was launched and sustained by affirmative forces. People voted for him much more emphatically than they voted against his opponents; but Governor Smith, too, was the beneficiary of punitive voting, though the indirect beneficiary.

The election figures in his case are as follows:

In 1918 Mr Smith was elected governor of New York by a plurality of fifty-three thousand votes in a poll of two million votes. Two years later he was defeated for re-election by seventy-four thousand votes, but it was the year in which Warren G. Harding carried New York State by 1,090,000 votes. Governor Smith had won a moral victory of large proportions. Its promise was fulfilled in 1922 when Mr Smith was elected governor by a plurality of 387,000 votes. Two years later he beat Theodore Roosevelt, the younger, by 110,000 votes even while Calvin Coolidge was overwhelming John W. Davis by nearly nine hundred thousand votes.

By 1922 the personality of Alfred E. Smith had made itself felt; but the beginning was that extraordinary performance of 1920 when Governor Smith, though beaten, received nearly half a million more votes than were cast for the Democratic nominee for President. That difference of half a million votes was not primarily a tribute to Governor Smith. It was a backhanded slap at the national Democratic ticket. With differences in degree this happened in most of the states in 1920. The pluralities against the state candidates on the Democratic ticket were much smaller than against the national ticket. The desire to punish Woodrow Wilson did not extend to the state candidates. Indeed, the way to punish Woodrow Wilson most effectively was to single out the Democratic national ticket for repudiation.

It is obviously not a matter susceptible of proof, but we might go so far as to say that Alfred E. Smith's heavy pluralities, beginning with 1920, were a form of compensatory action employed by large numbers of anti-Wilson voters. War memories proved too strong when people marked their ballots for President, and they continued to pile up huge majorities against Woodrow Wilson's successors long after Woodrow Wilson was gone from the scene; but they squared their consciences by voting for Alfred E. Smith for governor. He would thus be the indirect beneficiary of the old practice of voting against.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, as candidate for governor of New York in 1928 on the Democratic ticket, occupied the same position with respect to Alfred E. Smith, the Democratic candidate for President, that Mr Smith in earlier years occupied with respect to the Democratic Presidential nominees of the time. Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1928 was elected governor of New York by twenty-five thousand votes while Alfred E. Smith was losing the state to Herbert Hoover by more than one hundred thousand votes. The disparity between the Roosevelt vote and the Smith vote in 1928 was nothing like so great as the spread between the Smith and the Cox vote eight years earlier, but it was an impressive margin, several times multiplied in the popular mind by the difference between Mr Roosevelt, a winner, and Mr Smith, a loser. The finger of destiny began to swing in the direction of Alfred E. Smith early in the 1920s. The finger of destiny in 1928 swung tentatively to Franklin D. Roosevelt for whom a good many anti-Smith voters must have cast their ballots in compensation. The finger of destiny became rigidly set when Governor Roosevelt in 1930 was re-elected by a plurality of 725,000. This was not a vote for Governor Roosevelt but a vote against the Republican party. The Wall Street panic was a year old. It was the New York phase of a nation-wide revolt much more formidable than the anti-Republican uprising of 1884 which gave Grover Cleveland to the nation, or the Democratic feud of 1904 which laid the foundation for Theodore Roosevelt's enormous popularity.

In this analysis of how four great political leaders loomed up as men of destiny—Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, Alfred E. Smith, Franklin D. Roosevelt—we would seem to have argued strongly for the thesis that Americans vote against, rather than for. All four men got their start as instruments of protest and only later won the allegiance of millions by their own affirmative qualities. But this is to overlook the nature of the protest of which they were the expression. Men did not turn to Grover Cleveland to satisfy a low grudge, a partisan spite, but to make an end of an intolerable state of political corruption. Men did

not turn to Franklin D. Roosevelt because an astute propaganda had "smeared" Herbert Hoover. The great Roosevelt majorities in 1930 and 1932 were a protest against three years of hard times. The vote may be a protest vote but the purpose is affirmative.

It is only a superficial view that the American people never vote for and always vote against. As a matter of fact, Americans are always voting for, and it is always for the same thing. They always vote for prosperity. If a President happens to coincide with good times the American people re-elect him. If he happens to coincide with business depression they defeat him. In both instances they vote for the same thing, for prosperity.

If the year 1932 had found us as we were in early 1929 we would still be living under the Eighteenth Amendment. If Prohibition had coincided with prosperity the 1932 election would have seen Prohibition upheld.

If farmers had enjoyed prosperity in the preceding half-dozen years no one would have seriously thought of Philippine independence in 1933. Western agrarians clamored to let the Philippines go; they were not against keeping the Philippines; they were for keeping out Philippine competition.

The American voter does not go in for satisfying a grudge. He pursues a solid interest. He does not really punish an administration for bringing hard times. He merely asks it to make way for an administration that will bring back good times. He votes for.

4

We are by history and temper a plurality nation. In the 1937 battle over President Roosevelt's bill for the enlargement and rejuvenation of the Supreme Court there were two schools of opinion behind Mr Roosevelt. Extremists challenged the whole thesis of judicial authority over Congress. Moderates resented the exercise of this power of the courts when it took the form of close decisions in the highest tribunal. The main driving force against the Supreme Court was popular discontent with the famous five-to-four divisions. Many people who would shrink from a policy designed to "tame" the Supreme Court thought it only reasonable that a vote of seven judges to two, or at least six judges to three, be required to invalidate an act of Congress. Actually, it is the moderates who were, in the final implication, the more revolutionary. We may imagine a time when the power of the Supreme Court over legislation is abolished by Constitutional amendment. It would be a momentous change, but at bottom it would be a less serious departure from the American tradition than if we allowed the power of the courts to remain

but limited it by prescribing a minimum majority of six or seven judges.

We have been, since the beginning of the national government, a plurality people. When we say that the majority rules we mean really that the plurality rules. The power of the Supreme Court is great but the power of the President of the United States, year in year out, is still greater. His power is unquestionably greater in the eye of the American people, to a point where there can be no comparison between the two. We have only to ask ourselves how many American boys are taught that if they grow up they may be President of the United States, and how many are taught that they may become Chief Justice of the United States. We need only think how many rising young politicians, who nearly always are lawyers, have their eyes turned to the White House and how many to the Supreme Court bench. We have only to compare the popular interest and public passions aroused by a Presidential campaign and by a Supreme Court decision, even when it is a decision of great moment.

With this exalted view of the Presidency it is nothing less than extraordinary how often the American people have accepted without demur, and as a matter of course, Presidents elected by the very narrowest margins of the popular vote, or actually minority Presidents. Every schoolboy knows that in 1876 the Electoral Commission after a prolonged crisis found that Rutherford B. Hayes had been chosen President of the United States by 185 electoral votes against 184 for Samuel J. Tilden, and every schoolboy knows that it is still a matter of controversy whether the disputed votes of Florida, Louisiana and Oregon should all or in part not have gone to Tilden and made him President. What every schoolboy probably does not know is that even the Republican count of the popular vote gave Mr Tilden a plurality of 250,000 in the nation. It is debated whether Mr Hayes was legally President; nobody denies that he was a minority President.

The phenomenon of minority Presidents is made possible by our indirect election system. Every schoolboy knows that a plurality of a single vote in a state secures the entire electoral vote of that state. The schoolboy probably knows of Grover Cleveland who in 1884 won the thirty-six electoral votes of New York and the Presidency by a margin of 1149 votes over Benjamin Harrison in a total popular poll of 1,200,000. The schoolboy probably knows the case of Woodrow Wilson who in 1916 won the thirteen electoral votes of California and the Presidency by a margin of 3836 votes over Charles E. Hughes in a total popular poll of one million votes. It is not common knowledge, either among schoolboys or among their elders, that more than a third of our Presidents have been

the beneficiaries of such narrow margins. Out of thirty-two Presidents no less than eleven have been plurality or minority Presidents. By plurality Presidents we mean those who outran their nearest competitor but failed to secure a majority of the votes cast for all candidates.

The story begins with the election of 1824 and the four contenders—Andrew Jackson, J. Q. Adams, W. H. Crawford and Henry Clay. Andrew Jackson received more than one hundred and fifty thousand popular votes against one hundred and fourteen thousand for Adams and less than fifty thousand each for the other two candidates. Since none of the four had won a majority in the Electoral College the election went to the House of Representatives which chose John Quincy Adams, the first of our minority Presidents. In 1848 General Taylor was a plurality President with 1,360,000 votes against an aggregate of more than 1,500,000 votes for Cass and Van Buren. In 1856 Buchanan was down by nearly four hundred thousand votes to two candidates, Fremont and Fillmore. This was the prelude to the outstanding, the classic, example of our plurality Presidents. In 1860 Lincoln's popular vote of 1,866,000 was nearly a million under the aggregate votes cast for Douglas, Breckenridge and Bell. Samuel J. Tilden in 1876 we have already mentioned. In 1880 Garfield's popular vote was three hundred thousand under the joint vote of Hancock and Weaver. In 1884 Grover Cleveland was three hundred thousand votes down to James G. Blaine and two minor candidates. Benjamin Harrison in 1888 was actually down by one hundred thousand votes to Grover Cleveland whom he defeated, and down by seven hundred thousand votes to all his opponents. Cleveland won in 1892 but his popular vote was nearly a million under the vote for Harrison and minor candidates.

With the advent of William J. Bryan in 1896 the disparity between the two major parties became too wide for plurality Presidents; the votes cast for minor candidates could not fill the gap. For three elections the Republican margin continued to grow. Then in 1912 the Republican party split in two and Woodrow Wilson polled roughly 6,300,000 votes against an aggregate 7,600,000 votes for Theodore Roosevelt and William H. Taft. With only forty per cent of the total popular vote—the Socialist candidate, Debs, received nearly one million votes—Woodrow Wilson won eighty per cent of the electoral votes, four hundred and thirty-five against eighty-eight for Roosevelt and eight for Taft. In this one-sided fall of the cards is best illustrated the anomaly, if we wish to call it that, of our electoral system. In 1932 Franklin D. Roosevelt against Herbert Hoover scored one electoral vote for every fifty thousand popular votes, but Mr Hoover had to pay nearly two hundred and seventy thousand

popular votes for every one of his fifty-nine electoral votes. This was better than William H. Taft did in the triangular race of 1912 when the Republican candidate paid 435,000 popular votes for every one of his eight electoral votes. That in turn is dwarfed by the 1936 election when the same number of electoral votes, namely eight, cost the Republican candidate more than two million popular votes apiece.

And yet no serious challenge has ever been raised to an electoral system which so poorly answers to the popular will, if we wish to call it that. We have said that eleven Presidents out of thirty-two have been plurality or even minority Presidents. To these we may add the Presidents elected by a narrow majority. John Adams in 1796 beat Thomas Jefferson by seventy-one electoral votes to sixty-eight. Four years later Jefferson and Burr, under the voting system originally permitted by the Constitution, were tied at seventy-one votes each against sixty-five votes for Adams, and the House of Representatives chose Jefferson. In succession to Andrew Jackson in 1836 Van Buren defeated three opponents by twenty-seven thousand votes in a poll of 1,500,000, a margin of less than two per cent. In 1844 Polk defeated Clay by thirty-eight thousand votes in a poll of more than 2,600,000 votes, a margin of one and one half per cent. If we add these four instances to our eleven minority or plurality Presidents we have fifteen Presidents, or almost one half of the whole number, who have not been an impressive popular choice. Yet the decision, except in the special case of Hayes and Tilden in 1876, has been received as a matter of course.

This ingrained fidelity to the plurality principle shows itself in other ways. Since we are here concerned with the power of the Supreme Court to annul acts of Congress by a narrow majority it may be well to note that important acts of Congress have been enacted by narrow majorities. The people have accepted the luck of the cards in their legislative assemblies as in the election of their Presidents. The majority party in a legislative body organizes that body by electing its presiding officers and taking over the committee chairmanships with a majority on all the committees. This rule operates whether the legislative majority is overwhelming or of the narrowest kind. In December 1931 the Democrats for the first time in twelve years had a majority in the House of Representatives. They had 219 members against 214 Republicans and two Independents. They organized the House by electing John N. Garner to the office of Speaker by 218 votes against an actual poll of 212 votes for other candidates, but theoretically by a margin of just one vote in a body of 435 members. It was enough to give the Democrats control of all the House committees. The transfer of power took place as automatically

as in the national game of poker when aces over kings may be confronted by aces over kings and the stakes will go to the player who for his fifth card can show a trey against a deuce. In the New York legislature the Republicans in 1933 and the Democrats in 1935 controlled the lower house by mustering seventy-seven votes or one more than the required seventy-six in a body of one hundred and fifty-one members. In 1933 and 1934 the Democrats controlled the upper house at Albany by twenty-six votes against twenty-five Republican votes in a body of fifty-one members. These narrow margins were enough to organize the legislative chambers not only for the control of legislation but for the control of patronage. At the disposal of the majority are the clerkships and minor offices.

Even more striking an example of the force of the majority principle, no matter how narrow a majority may be, occurs, oddly enough, in our machine politics. This is a sphere where one would say offhand that principles as such do not exercise a potent spell. It is all the more impressive to find the sanctity of majority rule observed by men who at best may be described as practical politicians and on a lower level as spoilsmen and parasites. Control of powerful political machines has been won and lost by narrow margins. The overlordship of great cities, the title to immense royalties and perquisites have passed on a tight show of hands. A bitter campaign preceded the election in July 1934, of John T. Dooling as leader of Tammany Hall in succession to John F. Curry. A few days before the decision Mr Dooling's exultant supporters, in the news reports of the time, "claimed a minimum of $13\frac{2}{3}$ district leader votes in a total body of twenty-five district leaders." On this show of thirteen and two thirds votes against eleven and one third votes the opposition to Mr Dooling surrendered. Five years earlier, in April 1929, John F. Curry owed his election as leader of Tammany Hall to the single district leader's vote controlled by Mayor James J. Walker. It was a service which Mr Curry remembered two years later when the clouds gathered thick around the Walker administration and the Tammany chieftain stood loyally by the discredited mayor. No doubt a boss who has won power by a narrow squeak is not too secure in his place. Attempts to unhorse him will come frequently; but as long as he has a majority his fiat runs as unchallenged as that of a boss solidly intrenched. The most practical methods may be employed to garner a majority of district leaders in a Tammany meeting, or a majority of delegates in a national convention caucus; but no one questions the authority of perhaps a single vote in swinging an important state delegation to the side of this or that candidate.

Straying perhaps into the realm of fancy, one might say it is not altogether accident that the acceptance of the majority verdict or plurality verdict should be firmly established in a country and among a people whose business life emphasizes so strongly the principle of majority control. To own fifty-one per cent of the stock is as good as owning one hundred per cent for the purpose of management and control. This principle was ingrained in the normal life of our business corporations before a pathological phase manifested itself in the holding company of exaggerated type. It came to pass that the fifty-one per cent control of a very small and very manageable central corporation, by a multiplying series of fifty-one per cent levers and pulleys, gave ultimate control over enormous corporations with hundreds of thousands of stockholders and hundreds of millions in assets. It would not be quite true to say of this principle of marginal control in politics and business that it appeals strongly to the instincts of gambling people like ours, by subscribing to the idea of winner takes all. As a matter of fact the winner in American politics does not take all, and the law is supposed to protect the minority stockholder against the majority owner taking all. We have seen that in a House of 435 members the alignment of 218 votes against 217 votes will win the right to the Speakership and a majority on all the committees. But the minority has its vested title to representation on all committees. It is a minority representation but large enough to provide a show of opposition and debate.

Minorities in a democracy acquiesce in majority control by the narrowest of margins because minorities are assured of fair treatment by the majority. Both sides subscribe to the rules of the game. If the legislative majority which exercises control by one vote should lose that vote to the opposition, it will immediately hand over the control of things to the other side and step into the minority's shoes. The Speaker of the House descends from his chair and becomes the leader of the Opposition. To speak of it as a game does injustice to a basic tradition of our American democracy. It is much more than a game in which both sides abide by the rules because the rules work out evenly in the long run. A deeper instinct informs the American people that control by narrow majorities is a liberal and a just system for the reason that it favors the underdog. If we so prefer we can say it favors change and progress.

A great many Americans of progressive sympathies in the militant days of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal felt strongly that the Supreme Court should not be allowed by a vote of five judges to four or even six judges to three to set itself up against liberal legislation, against justice for the underprivileged, against the promise of a richer

life for the plain people. But if we look back a few pages in this chapter to our list of the plurality Presidents we cannot help being impressed by the fact that the narrow margin of power has in most instances operated in favor of what we should call today the liberal, progressive, forward-looking cause. The principle of the five-to-four vote, as we may broadly call it, has favored the struggling cause against the vested interest, the new popular movement against entrenched party strength. Liberals will surely not contend that the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 was a national misfortune; yet we have seen that Lincoln is the most minoritarian of our minority Presidents. He received a million fewer votes than were cast for three opposing candidates in a total poll of less than five million votes. Lincoln had only forty per cent of the popular vote. This is only two or three points higher than the percentage of Alfred M. Landon who was defeated in 1936 by a plurality of more than eleven million votes and carried only two states. Precisely because our electoral system makes it possible for a candidate with forty per cent of the popular vote to receive sixty per cent of the electoral votes, as Lincoln did, the man from Illinois became President and slavery was extinguished in the United States.

Liberals would not suggest that the election of Grover Cleveland in 1884 was a national misfortune. He was the protest against Republican misrule and corruption engendered by a quarter century of power. He was a current of fresh air in our fetid political atmosphere. He gave to American public life a figure of rare integrity. But as we have seen, it was only by the very narrowest margin that Grover Cleveland became President. His plurality of 1149 votes in New York was one tenth of one per cent of the popular vote in New York State; it was one one hundredth of one per cent of the total vote in the country. He was in an actual minority of three hundred thousand votes to all the opposing candidates.

Woodrow Wilson in 1912 had nearly a million and a half fewer votes than were cast for Theodore Roosevelt and William H. Taft. He had only forty-five per cent of the popular vote, but once more it was precisely our plurality system that broke up the Republican monopoly of power over a period of four national administrations.

Here, then, are three great liberal Presidents who were the beneficiaries of a system which might so easily, in theory, lend itself to just the opposite purposes. In 1860 we might have had a plurality President who sought to perpetuate slavery in the United States. In 1884 Grover Cleveland might have been the protagonist of spoils in politics. In 1912 Woodrow Wilson might have been opposed to banking reform and in favor

of a high tariff. These things did not happen. On the national record the scratch victory and the eyelash margin have favored progress and the plain people. And as for our anomalous Electoral College, if our Constitution prescribed an absolute majority of the popular vote, Abraham Lincoln could not have overcome the overwhelming numerical superiority of the Democrats in 1860, or Woodrow Wilson the combined Republican strength in 1912. Such a record will explain the instinct which makes the American people acquiesce in five-to-four decisions in the courts or in the legislatures or at the polls. It is a rule which in the long run has redounded to the public welfare.

In beginning the present chapter with an evaluation of the 1938 congressional and state elections we sought to make it clear that the aim was not to lay a foundation for prophecy. We have no concern with the fortunes of specific men, parties, issues and causes except as they fit into our general theme of American behavior. Our interest is wholly in the question how far the national life may be changing under our eyes, how far do the old constants stand. In the field of politics we have read the lesson of the 1938 elections to be a denial of revolutionary changes in public behavior, a reassertion of old habits. There has been no sharp break with the past, certainly no such abrupt separation as would render the lessons of the past valueless. For instance: had the 1938 elections taken a different course from the one they did, we should have indeed been rash to begin a chapter on American political behavior with data running as far back as Theodore Roosevelt, not to speak of John Quincy Adams.

5

Theodore Roosevelt has a contribution to make to the much predicted breakup of existing parties and their reorganization on logical lines of Conservative and Liberal. Between 1904 and 1909 under Theodore Roosevelt we had a national awakening comparable to that under Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932, if we make allowance for the effects of a World War and an unprecedented business depression. Theodore Roosevelt's words about the Interests were, for their time, even stronger than Franklin Roosevelt's. He spoke of malefactors of great wealth and of men with hard faces and soft hands, and he was as thoroughly disliked by the wealthy malefactors as the President Roosevelt of the New Deal. A generation ago, one would say, we had the beginning of a party realignment on the logical lines of Right and Left, with Theodore Roosevelt leading the new Left party. This actually came to pass in part in 1912, when he broke up the Republican party. He did not succeed

in breaking the Democrats, and what was largely a personal adventure speedily succumbed to the long-time rhythm of the American party system. It might be argued, to be sure, that Theodore Roosevelt was a pioneer and the time was not ripe. As late as 1924 Robert M. La Follette was still ahead of his time; the change is bound to come in the fullness of time; the yeast is working even if the bread is not yet ready for the oven. The thing may be said, but with far less confidence than before the 1938 elections. Since then it requires less courage to argue that the complaint about our badly constructed political parties has been made before, and in very much the same terms, and that the grievance passed and was forgotten. We are still free to predict that someday the great change will come. We are just as free to argue that it is a national habit to bewail from time to time our anomalous political parties, and then to forget the subject.

When the Republicans quote Thomas Jefferson and the Democrats take their stand with Alexander Hamilton that too conforms to precedent. Political parties are often inconsistent and unfaithful to basic party principles. For this very reason political parties survive. No set of principles can maintain unbroken consistency in the flux and flow of events, just as no statesman can escape the necessity of compromising with his philosophy and his record. Political parties live by bowing to necessity, by reading the signs of the times, by stealing the other fellow's clothes. Thomas Jefferson admittedly went Hamiltonian when he purchased Louisiana.

It is a habit among the perfectionists to discover that well-known and highly successful political parties are not really parties—when the argument requires it. Thus it has been argued that the Republican party which triumphed with Abraham Lincoln in 1860 was not a true party. It was only an alliance between the manufacturing East and the agricultural West on the basis of reciprocal tariff favors. To this we can only reply that an alliance which endures for the space of seventy-two years, from 1860 to the secession of the agricultural West from Mr Hoover in 1932, answers the same purpose as a party that lasts the same amount of time. Three quarters of a century is a good old age for a political party. The whole life span of the Federal Union after the first dozen years might be said to fall apart into two periods of approximately sixty-five years, each marked by the overwhelming domination of one party with a few brief intervals. After the year 1800 a Democratic majority existed until the year 1864 when Abraham Lincoln was re-elected by a Republican majority. This period of Democratic ascendancy was interrupted twice by the election of Whig Presidents in 1840 and in 1852. The period of

Republican ascendancy extended from 1864 to 1930 when the Congressional elections foretold the crushing verdict of two years later. This Republican era was likewise interrupted by the election of two Democratic Presidents in the persons of Grover Cleveland and Woodrow Wilson.

When has the nation boasted of an ideal homogeneous political party? If it is true that the Republican party in 1860 attained power as an alliance between tariff-protected Eastern manufacturers and tariff-protected Western farmers it is also true that back in 1800 the Jeffersonian party arose as an alliance between Southern farmers and Northern urban workers. Such combinations must obviously be based on a community of interest. In the case of Jefferson's agrarian-urban coalition it would be no doubt a common opposition to what we should call to-day Wall Street or the Interests. The Southern plantation owner was heavily in debt to the money people of Boston and New York for whom the Northern proletarian would have no special fondness. And yet such a combination plainly violates Thomas Jefferson's prepossession in favor of agriculture and his fear of the urban scum. We are forced to conclude that the ideal of a completely homogeneous political party cannot be realized in the complexities of a far-flung nation like ours, even as it was in the year 1800. We are forced to recall that marriages of convenience are as legally valid as love marriages, that they are far more numerous in the history of mankind, and that in the opinion of competent judges they are as successful.

Especially difficult to attain is the ideal homogeneous party in a nation that insists on thinking in terms of two parties only. We make the mistake of prescribing for a nation of one hundred and thirty million people and forty-five million voters the clear-cut doctrinal distinctions that may be found in the case of France where less than ten million voters split up into as many as twenty parliamentary groups. Similar was the situation in democratic Germany up to 1933, and for that matter everywhere on the Continent before the World War. In such a condition of atomic parliamentarism it is possible to speak in France of the party of big industrialists, of small industrialists, of public employees, of schoolteachers even, of small farmers in the South, of larger estates in the North, of factory workers, of steel industries. They are not parties but groups. They enter into the shifting combinations which are a permanent feature of French parliamentary life. Yet even these groups in the broader view fall into two main blocs, a Right and a Left, marked respectively by a preponderance of the well-to-do on the Right, of the plainer people on the Left.

A hard-and-fast division between rich and poor is not to be found

in France where the universal habit of thrift nurtures a capitalist mentality in the small farmer and even the worker. To this we must add external circumstances; external, that is, to the economic test which some theorists would make the only test for party affiliation. The small farmer of Northeastern France has known repeated foreign invasion and is Nationalist in temperament and a fellow partisan of the big iron and steel employers. The small farmers of Brittany are still Rightist and pro-church. The small farmer of Southern France is anti-clerical and Left.

What is true of the French Republic is true of us. Considerations of all kinds cut across economic lines and make strange bedfellows in the political party dormitories. Such forces are overlooked by the theorists who demand that all the conservatives move over from the Democratic party and all the radicals move away from the Republican party and that henceforth we operate two neat, one hundred per cent consistent political parties, by the test of economic interests. This program rests on two huge assumptions: that political parties are exclusively shaped by economic interests, and that such a logical, consistent party character is possible in a country of the size and diversity of the United States. Both assumptions may be easily challenged.

The case against a third party in the immediate future was forcibly if unconsciously stated by a Democratic member of the House of Representatives in the course of debate in the Spring of 1937. The subject of discussion was a proposed Congressional inquiry into the sit-down strikes then epidemic in the automobile factories. With disarming frankness the gentleman from Ohio reminded his Democratic colleagues from the safe Democratic states in the South that it was well with them; they would come back to Washington term after term regardless of the success or failure of a national Democratic administration. "But most of us who make up most of this great majority come from states where this is a vital issue, and we do not want it stirred up needlessly." It is odd to hear a statesman argue that vital issues must be let carefully alone, but he was thinking, naturally, of dangerous issues; that is to say, dangerous for Democratic congressmen whom the Roosevelt tidal wave of 1936 had swept in from traditionally Republican strongholds by narrow majorities. The situation in the House of Representatives in 1937 obviously could not approach the extraordinary fall of the cards the previous year in the Electoral College where Mr Roosevelt, with sixty-three per cent of the popular vote for the two major parties, won ninety-eight per cent of the electoral votes; but the disproportion in Congress was striking enough. In the House the Republican strength was twenty per cent or a trifle over one half of their popular vote. The

Republican popular vote was forty per cent in Pennsylvania and Ohio, but in Pennsylvania they won only twenty per cent of the seats and in Ohio only two out of our twenty-four seats or less than ten per cent. It is small wonder that a Democratic Representative from Ohio should dislike vital, dangerous issues like the sit-down strike. Alienation of even a part of the Labor vote could so easily wipe out narrow Democratic majorities in the Congressional districts.

Yet this very situation dims the chances of a third party, or at least of a separate Labor party. An independent Labor party would only deprive itself of the influence it exerted under President Roosevelt as the radical wing of the Democratic party. It was common after 1936 to emphasize the contrast between the methods of the American Federation of Labor and the methods of the new Committee on Industrial Organization under John L. Lewis; but the labor victories scored by Mr Lewis in the automobile and steel industries were palpably won by the American Federation of Labor strategy pursued for nearly half a century beginning with Samuel Gompers. This policy sternly rejected the idea of a separate Labor party and sought to gain advantages for Labor in the political sphere by a policy of rewarding its friends and punishing its enemies in Congress. Before the advent of the New Deal the Labor block in Congress was a potent factor in legislation, just as the Labor lobby was one of the most powerful of the pressure agencies in Washington. The 1936 Presidential election saw the application of American Federation of Labor tactics by John L. Lewis on a nationwide scale, when the C. I. O. leader rallied to Mr Roosevelt. The Congressional elections of 1938 were not wholly a middle-class revolt against the New Deal. With the middle class there must have moved a large section of the American Federation of Labor unions. The fears of the Democratic representative from Ohio concerning dangerous issues were realized.

The trend, then, is still away from the idea of a third party and to a reaffirmation of our traditional two-party system. The lesson has not been forgotten that in 1924 Senator La Follette on a third-party ticket polled nearly five million votes, but secured only thirteen electoral votes. A shift of such a bloc of votes from one major party to another might almost wipe out President Roosevelt's stupendous majority of 1936.

It is not irony but simple fact to point out that the Democratic party, the party of Thomas Jefferson, was dedicated after 1932 to a vast

expansion and centralization of governmental powers, while the Republican party, the party of Alexander Hamilton, became the party of States' Rights. People implicitly or explicitly accused the Roosevelt administration of paying lip service to Jeffersonianism and carrying on the tradition of Hamiltonian nationalism. But if it was lip service it was not conscious lip service; it was not calculated hypocrisy. President Roosevelt could reach out for a great enlargement of governmental and Federal powers and yet properly regard himself as a Jeffersonian, for the simple reason that Thomas Jefferson himself was a very poor Jeffersonian. And if there was irony in the spectacle of the Democratic party engaged in building up the Federal power, that contradiction would apply to the entire history of the Democratic party.

We face indeed a major paradox in the history of our two major parties. People start from the assumption that in our national history—and for that matter in the history of other countries—the prosperous classes have been in favor of strong government and the plain people have wanted a loose, weak government. The well-to-do classes want an aggressive nationalist policy expressing itself in territorial expansion; the plain people want no military and territorial adventures. In terms of British politics we think of the well-to-do classes as imperialists and of the plain people as Little Englanders. But whatever may be the facts of British history in the last hundred years, it is the paradox of our own history, beginning with the Presidency of Jefferson, that it is Jefferson's party, the party of the plain people, that has practiced strong government at home and practiced imperialism abroad. It is a paradox of our history that the largest growth in the power of the Federal Government and the entire process of territorial expansion of the present continental United States are part of the Jeffersonian record, that is to say, of the Democratic record.

Every schoolboy knows that Thomas Jefferson said he was stretching his authority to the breaking point when he bought Louisiana in 1803, but national interest decided. The national interest decided again when Florida was seized first and bought afterward from Spain, the rough work being done by the future great continuator of the Jeffersonian democracy, Andrew Jackson. Under a Democratic administration the occupation of the Continent was rounded out by the absorption of Texas and the spoils of the war with Mexico. If ever there was a war for imperialism it was the Mexican War. It was waged by a Democratic administration and it was assailed by James Russell Lowell in Whiggish New England. To blame it all on the Slave Power is to venture unduly

behind the returns. The blame or credit belongs to the Democratic party.

No doubt it is something of an answer that the party of Jefferson was in control of the Federal Government for sixty years after 1801 with two interruptions. The expansive forces of the national life would have imposed a policy of territorial aggrandizement on whatever party was in power. No doubt; but it is enough to show that the plain people of Jefferson and Jackson did not turn a deaf ear to the call of Manifest Destiny. On the other hand, the Republican party, of which we so readily think as the party of the wealthy classes and imperialist interests, was almost sluggish in listening to Manifest Destiny. It did not respond to the great drive for adventure in Cuba and Santa Domingo under President Grant. The acquisition of far-off Alaska was rather a commercial transaction than an advance in territorial policy. More than thirty years of Republican control were to elapse before our overseas expansion began with the first abortive attempts in Hawaii in 1893. Another five years elapsed before the Spanish-American War ushered in the era of what we now call American imperialism. To be sure, Grover Cleveland refused to have anything to do with Hawaii, and William J. Bryan made anti-imperialism an issue, and Woodrow Wilson insisted on giving to England parity in Panama Canal tolls; whereas it was Theodore Roosevelt who "took" the Panama Canal. That is why to recent generations the Republican party is bound up with territorial expansion and the Democrats are the Little Englanders of our own nation. But if the near future should largely undo the work of Republican expansion, when the Philippines are gone, it will be plain in the permanent record that the outstanding builders of American territory have been not the Hamiltonians but the Jeffersonians.

In domestic affairs it is equally striking how far the Democratic record departs from the Jeffersonian doctrine that the less government the better. Jackson's war on the United States Bank was not the action of a weak President, neither were his quarrels with John Marshall of the Supreme Court. To the doctrine of States' Rights in its extreme form Jackson gave the definite answer in his summary handling of Nullification in South Carolina in his first term. Fifty years after Jackson a Democratic administration sponsored the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887. A quarter of a century after Grover Cleveland the powers and responsibilities of the central Government were asserted by Woodrow Wilson in the Federal Reserve System. As we think back over the party history of the last fifty years to Grover Cleveland we find the Republicans standing out as the party of Big Business and therefore as opposed to the

intrusion of Government in business. We find the Democratic party—in Grover Cleveland's Interstate Commerce Act, in Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom, in Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal—standing out as the party favoring Government control over business, favoring a strong government in other words. So it might be said of President Roosevelt's quarrel with the Supreme Court in 1937, though not of his precise method, that it was a continuation of Jackson's quarrels with John Marshall, and of Grover Cleveland's angry complaints when the Supreme Court in 1894 annulled his income-tax law.

If we see a Jeffersonian party of the plain people formally subscribing to a minimum of government but rapidly transformed into a party favoring strong government and centralizing innovations the reason is not far to seek. The American nation was born in a popular uprising against misgovernment, and our natural temper at the beginning would be one of distrust of too much government. A strong government would be associated with the strong measures of George III's ministers which brought on the Revolution. In the early years of the nation words like "tyranny" and "despotism" and "oppression" were not the hollow sounds which our own sophisticated age is apt to make them.

The situation changes with the Jeffersonian victory of 1800 and the swift collapse of the Federalists. It is a human trait that a strong government with our own friends in control loses most of its terrors. The fear of centralism merging into monarchism faded out in the early years of the nineteenth century. Fear of strong government as leading to oppression disappeared, and in its place rose the conception of a strong government coming to the aid of the plain people against the privileged classes. It is the beginning of collectivism, if we wish to use modern terms. If we prefer the words of the Constitution frequently cited by President Franklin Roosevelt it is the promotion of the common welfare emphasized in the Preamble. It is the doctrine of the power of the state invoked, not for purposes of social revolution as people frequently speak of the power of the state now, but for social progress.

When people nowadays speak of the power of the state they are thinking in terms of modern industrial civilization, and the power they have in mind is the police power. If you elect your own governor and your own mayor then the chances are very good that the National Guard and the police department will be on your side in a labor dispute. This modern meaning of the power of the state must not make us forget that the thing can function and has so functioned in ways other than the manipulation of Law and Order. The power of the state is not only police and militia to crush strikes or support them, but it is legislation

to cut debts by manipulating the currency, legislation to lower rates of interest, legislation to slash farm taxes, to distribute public lands, to offer bounties of all sorts. To speak of the power of the state today is to call up a picture of proletarian overturn, of labor radicalism at the mildest. But the history of American radicalism is largely agrarian. Discontented farmers have known how to use the power of the state. Agrarianism is by no means hostile to collectivism in the form of free land, public works, subsidies for farmers. The intervention of the state for the welfare of the working masses antedates the Industrial Age. Thomas Jefferson not only bought Louisiana for the American people but was one of the originators of the policy of Federal bounty to develop and people the vacant land.

7

The years after the World War saw a notable decline in the power of the political machine. The figure of the Boss lost stature in the American landscape. This was true of the city boss as he used to function every day in the year, and of the state boss who dwelt in comparative retirement between Presidential years, to emerge quadrennially in the formidable role of kingmaker. It has been said that with the death of Boies Penrose of Pennsylvania in 1921 there passed away the last of the race of political barons. Perhaps we should extend the seignorial era another two years to the 1924 Democratic convention when Thomas Taggart, the Democratic satrap of Indiana, succeeded in winning the vice-presidential nomination for his original Favorite Son. Since the passing of these two men no state leader has arisen in either party to take his place with the great figures of an earlier generation—Thomas C. Platt of New York, Matthew S. Quay of Pennsylvania, whose successor Boies Penrose was, Arthur Pue Gorman of Maryland, and the most eminent of them all, Mark Hanna of Ohio.

In the cities the machine and the boss maintained their position a few years longer. The line of powerful Tammany chieftains in New York came to an end with the death of Charles F. Murphy in 1924 after a reign of twenty-two years. Since his time there have been leaders of Tammany Hall, but with nothing like the ancient authority either over the Tammany faithful or the community. It has been a period of petty wars of succession fought for a dwindling heritage. The power of the machine endured a longer time in Philadelphia where it ended with the passing of the Vare domination shortly after the nomination of Herbert Hoover for President in 1928, a coup with which State Senator Vare is sometimes credited. Since the beginning of the 1930s just one boss of

large dimensions has appeared on the scene, and that is Thomas J. Pendergast, the Democratic boss of Kansas City and of Missouri. In 1939 he fell, like Lucifer, from place and power to a long jail sentence for chronic evasion of the Federal income-tax law. So widespread is the habit of regarding the political machine as based on the large foreign-born populations of our great cities that it is useful to be reminded of a powerful city boss enthroned in the heart of the Great West on the border between Missouri and Kansas. This only continues the native tradition of Aaron Burr who built up the first successful political machine in a pre-immigrant New York; it was a machine which operated with an efficiency seldom excelled in later years anywhere in the United States.

The decline of the professional boss in national politics has been primarily due to the appearance on the scene of a formidable rival in the person of the political leader who is also the standard bearer in elections. The old-type boss attained full flower in the person of Mark Hanna whose achievements in winning the Republican nomination for William McKinley in 1896 and electing him President over William J. Bryan are the high-water mark in expert leadership. It was only another instance of the golden age ushering in an age of rapid decline. That hard-won victory of Mark Hanna's over the young free-silver Lochinvar from the West was really the close of an epoch. William J. Bryan was defeated, but the thing which he typified, the self-made leader who does not truckle to the bosses but imposes his will on the bosses, was destined to win an early and lasting victory.

Bosses, machines, party organizations thrive best when the battles at the polls are closely fought; and this was the case in the nation for a quarter of a century before the emergence of William J. Bryan. When the fortunes of two volunteer armies are evenly matched a small number of professional soldiers thrown on one side or the other may easily determine the issue. From the Tilden election in 1876 to the second Bryan defeat in 1900 the two national parties were on an even footing and elections went by slim pluralities. After 1900 the disruptive effects of William J. Bryan inside the Democratic party became decisive. There begins the era of heavy party majorities. McKinley led Bryan in 1896 by slightly more than half a million votes and four years later by approximately 850,000 votes; but in 1904 Theodore Roosevelt defeated Alton B. Parker by more than 2,500,000 votes in a smaller total poll than those of 1896 or 1900. When a candidate can score victories like that he need not take advice from a boss. He is his own boss.

Especially since the World War and the advent of woman suffrage

have the majorities been huge, and the winner has naturally looked upon himself as his own generalissimo. Mighty forces like a World War or a catastrophic business collapse have determined the fall of the votes. It has not been a time for would-be manipulators called bosses, for machines that can deliver this state or that city. The comparatively small army of mercenaries under the control of the machine is far from exercising the power which it did in quieter times and with a smaller electorate. Two men who strikingly typify the combination of the popular leader and the powerful boss in the same person are Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin in the first quarter of the present century and Huey Long of Louisiana in the decade of the 1930s. Far apart in character, capacities and political technique, they were alike in their dual role as tribunes of the people and operators of a very efficient political machine.

In the cities we see the same process of public leadership by a popular candidate supplanting the private, all too private, leadership of the boss. Machines persist, but the tenure of the chief machinist, the boss, is as a rule brief in comparison with the reigns of former days. Sometimes the chief office-holder, the mayor, is himself the boss. He is in Chicago a first-rate demagogue in the person of William Hale Thompson who was mayor for twelve years out of sixteen, between 1915 and 1931, on a platform which may be described as chiefly anti-British. It was Mayor Thompson who threatened George V with personal chastisement if the British monarch ever came to Chicago. Capitalizing the lingering sentiment against America's participation in the World War, Mayor Thompson, nominally a Republican, imposed himself by a flamboyant technique on the organization of his own party; so that we may think of him as his own organization. Largely this was true of James Michael Curley who between 1915 and 1934 was three times mayor of Boston and at the end of his last term went on to be governor of Massachusetts. He actually profited by the fact that as a young man he served a jail term for impersonating a friend in a civil-service examination. "He did it for a friend" became the slogan which changed a badge of shame into a medal of honor. His elevation to the governorship was the reward of Mayor Curley's astuteness in tying his wagon to the rising star of Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1932, when other Democratic leaders in Massachusetts were sulking in their tents out of loyalty to their national standard bearer of four years ago, Alfred E. Smith.

If there is force in our argument that the decline of the party machine and the professional boss in national politics has been in large measure the result of one-sided party majorities, then it would follow that a re-

turn to something like parity between Republican and Democratic voting strength should mean a bigger role for the boss and the Organization. Beginning with the Republican victory of 1920, the winner in five successive Presidential elections never carried less than three fourths of the states. The part played by manipulation in such a result is plainly unimportant. When the outcome of Presidential elections is once more debated in terms of narrow margins and pivotal states it would be a fair inference that professional leadership will take on a new consequence.

8

Strange as it may seem at first sight, the Negro vote in the North carried greater weight in national elections in the past when it was numerically a fraction of what it is today. It used to be said, and no doubt with truth, that in more than one of the five states of the old Northwest Territory the colored vote held the balance of power and thereby assured Republican ascendancy in those states. This was truer fifty years ago when these states had something like two hundred thousand Negroes, and even thirty years ago when they had three hundred thousand, than it was ten years ago when they had almost a million.

In earlier days election pluralities were much smaller and the weight of a compact group vote was much greater than in our own day with its landslide and tidal-wave majorities. Indiana had forty-five thousand Negro residents in 1890 with an indicated Negro vote of ten thousand. Indiana had one hundred and ten thousand Negroes in 1930 with an indicated vote, under woman suffrage, of perhaps fifty thousand. Ohio had in 1890 perhaps twenty thousand Negro voters and in 1930 possibly one hundred and fifty thousand Negro voters. But in 1884 Grover Cleveland won Indiana by six thousand votes over Blaine, lost it by two thousand votes to Benjamin Harrison in 1888, and won it back four years later from Harrison by seven thousand votes. In such close decisions a solid block of ten thousand Negro votes might well have played a decisive part. Mr Hoover in 1928 carried Indiana by almost three hundred thousand plurality over Alfred E. Smith and four years later lost the state to Roosevelt by nearly two hundred thousand votes. The Negro vote in forty years had increased fivefold but the pluralities had increased fifty to one hundredfold. Fifty years ago, when Ohio had perhaps twenty thousand Negro votes, Grover Cleveland lost the state to Blaine by thirty-two thousand votes, to Harrison by twenty thousand votes, and to Harrison again by one thousand votes. In that last election

it is obvious that the Negro vote, solidly Republican, decided the election. In 1928, when Ohio had perhaps one hundred and fifty thousand Negro voters, Mr Hoover won the state by eight hundred thousand votes. Four years later he lost Ohio by seventy-five thousand votes to Roosevelt, and in 1936 President Roosevelt carried it a second time by more than six hundred thousand votes. That narrow Ohio majority for Roosevelt in 1932 is an outstanding exception. New York had perhaps twenty thousand Negro votes in the decade when Grover Cleveland won the state from Blaine by one thousand votes and lost it to Benjamin Harrison by fourteen thousand votes. In the decade around 1930 the Negro vote in New York State was nearly ten times as large, but the Presidential pluralities in the state ran between half a million and a million.

Should the balance of parties in Presidential elections ever return to the narrow pluralities which obtained between 1876 and 1896, and the comparatively modest pluralities which obtained for another twenty years until the great landslide of 1920, it would restore, in theory, the influence of the Negro vote; and all the more if the lapse of years has undermined the hereditary Republicanism of the colored people. Seventy-one years after the death of the Great Emancipator a Negro political leader in the Presidential campaign of 1936 declared that his race had paid off its debt to Abraham Lincoln, and Abraham Lincoln was dead but Franklin D. Roosevelt was with us. If we begin to detect about the year 1928 a Negro drift away from the Republican party we must remember that it was a time when men on all sides were cutting loose from historic party moorings. While the Negroes in New York were voting in considerable numbers for Alfred E. Smith, in the Solid South no less than four states voted for the Republican candidate against "Al" Smith. Four years later the whole Middle West, where Republicanism had its birth, seceded from the Republican party.

Small wonder then that the Negroes in the North, under the influence of the passing years and a new geographical and social environment, should break with their hereditary loyalties. They found themselves responding to local conditions. This process was accelerated by practical considerations. We have said that the Negro vote had ceased to carry the weight it formerly did in Northern states, but this holds only in regard to national and state-wide elections; in local elections a large Negro vote naturally plays a more important role. So we find Chicago electing a Negro to Congress in the decade after the World War. New York has had Negro assemblymen and aldermen, and in 1936 saw the elevation of a Negro to the post of Tammany district leader. That same year Mayor La Guardia appointed the first Negro magistrate.

9

Pressure group would be in essence the new name for an old political institution, the legislative lobby. Yet the change of emphasis from the mechanism of pressure, the lobby, to the power that operates the mechanism, the pressure group, does represent an advance towards more realistic, more honest thinking. Lobby used to connote, and for that matter still does, a compact aggregation of selfish interests engaged in a questionable enterprise. It might be the furtive lobby that once upon a time purchased franchises and other public favors from venal legislators. The group is acknowledgment of the fact that great numbers of the citizenry may join to exert pressure on the lawmakers, even though it is pressure openly exerted in behalf of a cause openly avowed. A pressure group may mean three million members of the American Federation of Labor or an even larger number of farmers. We now recognize that it is not only the Interests that bring pressure to bear on lawmakers, but also the interests with a small "i"—the farm interest, the labor interest, the manufacturing interest, with their many subdivisions. At the same time we have by no means attained a clear distinction between the old-style sinister lobby operated by a gang or a clique and the new pressure group representing a large body of public opinion. People will begin by deploring the influence of a large, if misguided, pressure group and unconsciously slide into the older habit of attacking a conspiracy, a Hidden Hand. This will come about more readily because the old-style furtive lobby manages to exist side by side with the militant pressure group. More than that, the new pressure group will sometimes avail itself of the old lobby technique.

It is often a simple thing to draw the line between the pressure group and the lobby. Such a case would be the downpour of telegrams of protest which descended upon Congress in the Summer of 1935 when it had under consideration the Roosevelt administration's program for the reform and control of public-utility companies. The telegrams professed to come from small holders of utility securities whose interests were jeopardized by the proposed legislation. Now it is no secret that such upheavals are rarely the spontaneous outbursts of an indignant public opinion. Mobilization has been usually preceded by a great deal of professional staff work. In the present instance it went far beyond that. Most of the telegrams turned out to have been drawn up and dispatched in bulk by representatives of the utility interests who signed the

personal names freely drawn from the local telephone directories. It was a case of pressure applied in the old crude lobbying sense.

A different outcome marked the labors of a committee of the United States Senate which investigated, in the Winter of 1935-36, American munition exports. Europe was in the grip of an international crisis precipitated by the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. Inevitably a movement arose in this country to keep the United States from becoming involved in another European war. The story of our World War experience was scanned anew for lessons, and a natural first lesson was the pressing need to discover and frustrate all persons and groups who might be planning to take this country into another war as, according to one widely held theory, they took us into the World War. That was the force behind the munitions inquiry, and it was a state of mind expressing itself in the Congressional mandate which had already imposed on President Roosevelt a policy of neutrality in the conflict between Italy and Ethiopia.

It cannot be said that the Senate Committee's study of munition makers and international bankers went very far toward convincing the American people that wars are forced upon them by hidden hands, individual or corporate. On the contrary, as we delved into the history of the World War and of pressure applied on Woodrow Wilson to swing us to the side of the Allies, it became impossible to overlook the existence of many different pressures. There was pressure by American farmers eager for high food prices, by American industrialists eager for war profits and by American labor leaders who feared the effect on employment of a sudden stoppage in the war industries. Thus it was made obvious, what men of sense knew from the first, that the thing which really took us into the war was, in Woodrow Wilson's phrase, a great body of circumstance. If responsibility for our going to war in 1917 attaches to the House of Morgan it also falls on many an anti-Wall Street journalist of the time who saw in this war a test between free government and militarism.

Pressure groups are thus seen to multiply and expand until they shed their wickedness and selfishness and become coextensive with a normally constituted nation of average human beings of different interests and schools of opinion. In the course of the argument it becomes necessary to recognize that there are groups which exercise pressure for good as well as for evil. There is pressure behind a Child Labor Amendment and behind a Soldier's Bonus. There is a Labor lobby as well as a Tariff lobby. Businessmen who have their lobbyists in Washing-

ton deplore the existence of a war veterans' lobby. The veteran organizations, as representative of the plain American people, strongly resent lobbying by manufacturers and bankers. Newspapers have always denounced special lobbies and pressure groups as inimical to the national interest, but in a conflict between the Newspaper Publishers' Association and the Roosevelt administration over the privacy of business letters and telegrams in 1936, involving, as many sincerely believed, a threat to the freedom of the press, the publishers put their case in the hands of a lawyer who was generally regarded in Washington as one of the leading experts in the art of bringing pressure to bear on Government.

Our traditional capacity for being shocked by the obvious attained its burlesque climax in the discovery, about this time, that the most dangerous of all lobbies at Washington is the Social Lobby. A brave attempt was made to express appropriate horror at the thought that members of Congress may be influenced directly or through their wives by Washington hostesses who minister to a congressman's self-esteem, his wife's desire for social recognition, and not impossibly a liking for good food and drink. This particular scandal failed to get very far; even the American mind in a fit of sudden virtue could not long overlook the fact that this kind of social lobby has functioned in the governance of men as long as there has been organized society. It is an old doctrine that England is in great part ruled by week-end house parties. One of the chief secrets of British stability has been found by some students in the fact that rising young men from the lower classes are regularly won over to the side of the ruling caste by the consistent efforts of the social lobby. An enormous amount of gossip dealt with the supposed role of the Clevedon Set in shaping British foreign policy in the tense years after the rise of Adolf Hitler.

Objectively studied, the most flagrant examples of lobbying and group pressure on legislators have occurred in connection with good causes, progressive causes, public-spirited causes, popular causes. We have mentioned the Child Labor Amendment. Peace organizations bring heavy pressure to bear on lawmakers. New York schoolteachers in the Spring of 1936 forced through a law at Albany restoring their emergency salary cuts even while the persistence and intensification of the national emergency was being recognized in larger relief expenditures and higher taxes. The most powerful of all pressure groups was, in its time, the Anti-Saloon League. It played a decisive role in our Prohibition experiment of the years 1920-33. While the battle was under way the nation had the spectacle of Anti-Saloon agents openly lobbying on the floor of Congress and the state legislatures. They kept check on the progress

of roll calls from the gallery. It was a condition forcefully exploited by the opponents of Prohibition in their campaign for repeal, though not every opponent of the Eighteenth Amendment displayed the consistency of Dr Nicholas Murray Butler, head of Columbia University. He opposed the Child Labor Amendment on the same grounds as the Prohibition Amendment, namely, that the individual states should not be coerced into reforms against which they had a strong popular majority. Good citizens, and particularly women susceptible to the moral argument, were consistent in invoking the amendment procedure to prohibit child labor and alcohol. We cannot say as much for the members of the American Legion who in the great majority denounced coercion by the Anti-Saloon League but who brought tremendous pressure to bear on Congress for the enactment of a cash bonus payment ten years before it was legally due. Legion lobbyists sat in the gallery and cracked the whip over congressmen even as the Anti-Saloon League used to do.

Pressure groups are very much like States' Rights. We have seen the Republican party, heir to the Hamiltonian tradition and historic champion of a strongly centralized government, clamorous in defense of the rights of the states against the menace of regimentation and dictatorship by President Roosevelt. We have seen the Democratic party, historic champion of decentralization and States' Rights, urging national "integration" and loudly contemptuous of the Republicans' new-born concern for local and personal liberty. In the same way it happens that one man's lobby becomes another man's constitutional rights. One man's pressure group is another man's basic democratic right to organize and focus public opinion. Logically there should be no hostility to pressure groups in a nation proud of its government of checks and balances. In the competition and interplay of pressure groups we have the principle of checks and balances plainly at work. No doubt in an ideal world a national legislature would refuse to be swayed by other than the national interest. Yet the Federal Constitution assumes frankly that this is not an ideal world inhabited by a human race addicted to self-sacrifice. The rival play of pressure groups is consistent with James Madison's doctrine of Republican stability.

The presidential primary is at bottom make believe, even in those states which come nearest to investing the primary with binding authority. The system runs through all degrees of obligation imposed on the delegate, but actually the choice is always made in the national con-

vention where the unforeseen play of forces will render the ultimate decision. A sacred band of delegates may continue voting to the last for a lost hope, but not because they are bound by the primary in the home state. It is a matter of their own feelings. Other delegates may stand behind their candidate until by him "released," in the technical phrase, but a disheartened delegation may come very close to compelling the candidate to release it. In no case does the primary law itself designate the precise moment or the precise conditions when a delegate is free to depart from the instructions imposed on him by the party voters in the primary.

Some primary laws require an affirmative candidacy before a man can be voted for. In some cases the candidate must actually file a signed declaration. In some cases the name of any candidate can be placed on the list by a voter of the state. In some states an instructed delegation may do its duty by casting a single ballot in the national convention. In some states the law or party custom requires that the candidate shall be voted for as long as he has a reasonable chance. In other states an instructed delegation can be released only by the candidate. The authors of the Presidential primary a generation ago believed they would automatically make Presidential nominations a matter of popular choice; but in those states where the primary requirements are most rigid the law has been circumvented by instructing for a Favorite Son, which has the effect of leaving the delegation entirely free after a ceremonial gesture.

Out of this welter of instructions, preferences and first and second choices the fact emerges that the delegate to a national convention is not a delegate at all but a representative. He is a truer representative in the real sense of the word than most of the members of the House of Representatives in Washington. The average congressman is parochial in outlook and behavior. He thinks chiefly of his district and takes orders from his district, but a state delegation at a national convention is representative in the broad British use of the word. It is elected from a particular state, but in the final instance it represents the party in the whole nation. One enthusiastic supporter of the Presidential aspirations of Colonel Franklin Knox in the New Hampshire Republican primaries of 1936 lauded him as an outstanding leader who could be trusted at the right moment to release his delegates!

The case of Colonel Knox in New Hampshire sums up the Favorite-Son institution which is simultaneously a rooted tradition and an ingenious mechanical device. The interplay of authentic sentiment and practical advantage is in itself a familiar American manifestation. We have spoken

elsewhere of state pride as a genuine national trait. Every state governor of more than humdrum ability looks upon himself as Presidential timber and is so considered, officially, by the people of his state. Should he intimate a desire to try for the great prize he is regarded by public opinion as automatically entitled to the support of the people of his state—formally and until such time, in the words of our New Hampshire delegate, as he releases or is compelled to release his delegates. Colonel Knox was born and bred in New Hampshire and becomes its Favorite Son though his adult career lay in other parts of the country and scarcely ran in the New Hampshire tradition. Herbert Hoover was a small boy when he left his native state of Iowa, but the “home” state of Iowa was duly exploited for Mr Hoover in his campaigns for the Presidency. Just as every American man is assumed to have a contribution to make to the common stock of wisdom and achievement, so every town, county and state has its gifted son to offer to the nation. At the same time the Favorite Son falls in very conveniently with the needs of the political generals in the nomination campaigns. The Favorite Son is an admirable trading device. State loyalty and practical considerations manage to dwell together in concord.

II

In the first week of July 1936, a Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia dedicated five days to a piece of business that might well have been transacted in half a day. This was the renomination of President Roosevelt by acclamation. The fact that five days were required to sanction the inevitable is one more proof that the national party convention remains the most characteristic, as it is the most impressive, of American folk festivals. The soul and mind and manners and history of our nation are epitomized in this quadrennial display of clamor, sweat, oratory—and organization. One imaginative writer in the newspapers has sought to trace the national party convention back to the practices of the Indian tribes before Christopher Columbus; and while we need not take the ingenious argument too seriously there is a thrill of mystic plausibility in the thought that our national party conclaves spring from the very soil of America, its rocks and rills and templed hills before it was a land of liberty for men of the white race.

So interpreted, the party convention would be the American nation refreshing its youth by going back to its earliest origins. Demonstrations on the floor of the convention hall are the old Indian war dances in essence as well as in form. “Elderly gentlemen,” says one newspaper ac-

count of the Philadelphia convention which nominated Franklin D. Roosevelt for his second term, "were tossing perfectly good Panama hats into the arena for stamping delegates to trample on." The instinct which hurls good Panama hats into the aisles of a convention hall is the sacrificial instinct which impelled the original red man to throw a lock of his hair into the fire, and now and then an eldest child. "Kindly faced old ladies were tearing up newspapers to shower on their nearest neighbors." This would be a sublimation of the much harsher behavior with which the squaws of the tribe used to greet an unfortunate war prisoner. Our conventional Convention, with its war dances, war whoops, totem poles in the form of standards of the states, processions, animal parades, banners, balloons, vegetable displays, ten-gallon hats and the rest, is strongly aboriginal. The gathering of the states is a gathering of the tribes. Long custom has robbed our Indian nomenclature of its freshness; it needs a parade of the states down the aisles of the convention hall to remind us how predominantly Indian we are. More than half of the forty-eight Commonwealths have aboriginal names. When the United States Supreme Court comes to the defense of the states it draws on a source of authority higher even than the Constitution. Our separate states are in the very air of the land. When paunchy elderly postmasters whoop and prance and sing for Alabama, Dakota, Illinois, Iowa, they are the spiritual successors of Creeks, Sioux, Winnebagos, Iroquois, who were similarly demonstrative in their local loyalties. From the red men may have come our political machines. After all, the political boss holds office at the good will of the braves of the tribe. As for the smoke-filled hotel rooms in which it is a wide belief that the decisions at national conventions are really made, it is interesting to recall that all the original rooms on this Continent before the white man came, known as wigwams, were smoke filled.

Other reasons will readily occur, less metaphysical in nature and less remote in time. The national party convention is more than a hundred years old, and like other ancient institutions it retains traces of its horse-and-buggy origins. When a convention delegate has journeyed perhaps a week, as one might have done in the earlier days, it is inevitable that he make a little holiday of his serious mission. Even today we may take it that the delegates from California or Texas will be two or three days in getting to Philadelphia. This tourist phase is an argument for staging a show that does not end too quickly. The businessmen of Philadelphia contributed the handsome sum of two hundred thousand dollars to the Democratic campaign fund for the privilege of entertaining the convention, and are supposed to have received the usual guarantee

of a five-day session in which hotel keepers and tradesmen might recoup themselves. This would be a blending of business and carnival which all nations have known.

When all practical and cynical deductions have been made it is still true that a national convention lasts five days because normally its purpose requires five days. There are conventions whose work is cut and dried in advance, like the Democratic meeting of 1936 in Philadelphia, but as a rule the business of a convention is to convene. It is a nationwide party consultation. It is a rubbing of minds out of which ideas, policies and strategies, as well as candidacies and contingencies, may arise. It is on a vast scale the old town meeting, which, too, has its well-oiled machinery and its agenda, but where the unforeseen is never wholly excluded. It is hardly necessary to recall the well-established tradition of the Dark Horse, the uphill victory of Woodrow Wilson over Champ Clark in the 1912 Democratic convention, the Harding nomination at the Republican convention in 1920, the furious battles at the Democratic convention of 1924 in New York. We see in these huge party meetings a spontaneous release of mass energy whose effects cannot be foretold in advance. By this we mean that when the Dark Horse runs away with the coveted prize it is not always the result of pure chance. The outcome is rather like the decision of a war council in the face of a suddenly altered situation. National conventions respond to the purpose for which they have met—to nominate a winning candidate or, in rare cases, to nominate a losing candidate, as the Democrats knew very well they were doing in 1904 and again in 1924, or the Republicans knew in 1912.

It is true, then, that design and organization mingle with horseplay at the great party conventions. The famous demonstrations are largely compounded of calculated frenzies and hired bandmasters. The delegations go wild by the timetable. Rival candidates set out in cold blood to outdo each other in duration of clamor. Waves of enthusiasm are kept going with new injections of fife and drum. There are heroic forced marches by delegates in the aisles. Reinforcements of cheerleaders are thrown into the fray until the stop watches duly announce all previous records of the day broken, perhaps a new all-time mark set up.

And yet such is human nature and such is our national practice, that a genuine emotion speaks out in the pumped-up bacchanal. The blare of the brass bands and the hard-faced and tough-minded politicians parading on tired elderly feet are, contrary to all appearances, a valid manifestation. It is the same national ethos which makes it incumbent on the elderly college alumnus to don a paper hat and monkey-suit at his thirty-

fifth reunion and seek to recapture a youth that has long ago vanished. The heart of the matter is that the convention-hall demonstration and the alumni parade are democratic ritual. It is the thing to be done; and in the United States very few men are strong enough or, for that matter, so inclined to abstain from doing the thing that is done; to read the book that is being read, listen to the same radio comedian, and even to recite at the nicest dinner tables the same raffish vaudeville joke that everybody has been telling until its insalubrity is gone.

Our parallel between the convention delegate and the red man in his ceremonial dance is true to this extent: that the Indian was ruled by prescription and taboo, and the dignified elderly governor of New York is bound by prescription and taboo to cheer and parade with the standard of his state and perhaps even to indulge in a sober howl or two. When the Tammany delegate leaps to his feet and yells for Franklin D. Roosevelt he is for the moment carried out of himself into something genuine, boyish, primitive. As a good Tammany man he at heart dislikes Franklin D. Roosevelt and is bowing only to necessity, but he is sincere enough when he waves his New York standard and so affirms his own local identity and importance in a general scheme. A convention scene which combines serious business with the circus and county fair, banners flying, toy balloons bursting in air, donkeys and mules paraded down the aisles, young girls dancing the cakewalk before the chairman's rostrum—it is folk festival on a huge scale. America has no dances on the village green like Finland and no peasants to celebrate Spring and Autumn equinoxes in picturesque costume. But we have our own sense of communion in the high jinks of the national convention as in the high jinks of the alumni reunion; and the Old World festivals, Spring and Summer, are basically communion ceremonies. They identify men with nature. At our national conventions Oregon and Minnesota and Rhode Island celebrate a mystic bond. If it is often a case of obese and elderly office-holders under the influence of liquid stimulant, that too is in the ancient tradition. Wine, hashish or Hindu bang, are well-known factors in producing religious ecstasies.

The space of two generations intervenes between the beginning of Samuel J. Tilden's successful assault on the Tweed Ring in 1872 and the election of Thomas E. Dewey as district attorney of New York County on an anti-Tammany platform in 1937. It is exactly the number of years between the election of Thomas Jefferson and the death of Abraham

Lincoln. It is not very far short of one half the lifetime of our Federal Union. Yet we find in the opening career of young Mr Dewey in 1937 the same native play of forces, the same native response, the same problems and the same popular temper that confront us sixty-five years earlier in the story of Samuel J. Tilden.

The idealistic young prosecuting attorney who battles the organized forces of corrupt politics and its business allies and is rewarded by a grateful people with the highest honors in its gift is by now a venerable American tradition. His place is secure in the popular literature and drama and the films. He is saved from becoming a hackneyed figure of melodrama by the simple fact that from time to time he comes to life in the actual news of the day. Every little while, as years go in a people's life, we do produce the young hero who battles the dragon of political corruption and wins the fair princess. Mr Tilden was not technically a prosecuting officer, but as chairman of the Democratic State Committee he did constitute himself a prosecutor in effect. He opened fire on the Tweed gang in 1872. He was elected governor of New York in 1874. Two years later, many people believe, he was elected President of the United States; that, in any event, he had an impressive popular plurality over his Republican opponent, Hayes, is conceded.

Ten years later this swift upward progress of the people's champion was repeated with classic success by Grover Cleveland. He rose in three years from mayor of Buffalo to President of the United States. He was not precisely the district attorney who frames indictments and wins convictions in court, but in essence Grover Cleveland's earlier career was an indictment and a criminal conviction of Republican misrule in state and nation. Thomas E. Dewey was first appointed a special prosecutor by the governor of New York in 1935 to take the place of the district attorney of New York County in certain criminal cases where an undue official tenderness was suspected. In 1937 Mr Dewey was elected district attorney on a fusion ticket. The next year, as Republican candidate for governor and already a national figure, he came within a very narrow margin of victory over the three-time Democratic governor who had given him his start. Actual victory would have made Mr Dewey a very strong candidate for the Republican nomination for President in 1940; in the opinion of many, the inevitable candidate. But for the purpose of our theme Mr Dewey's defeat for governor by a margin of one per cent of the total vote cast is as immaterial as Mr Tilden's loss of the Presidency by *force majeure*. The tradition was vindicated in both cases. For more than a generation after Tilden and Grover Cleveland the young prosecuting attorney who fights corrupt politicians and crime

or the investigator who exposes business corruption and so wins promotion was a recurrent phenomenon in different parts of the country. He was Charles E. Hughes and Charles S. Whitman in New York, Hiram Johnson in California, James W. Folk in Missouri. He was less frequently encountered in the years after the World War when, as we have seen elsewhere, the sweep of great political tides determined the fortune of political parties and things rather than men were in the saddle. His return in the person of Mr Dewey under circumstances so closely resembling those of two generations ago is convincing proof of his vitality. We may lay it down as a general theorem on the processes of political ambition in the United States that wherever a district attorney arises to fight political corruption in his city with success public opinion loses no time in plotting his course for the governorship of his state and, without undue delay, for the White House.

This predilection for the prosecuting officer, for the man who attacks and destroys evil rather than the man of proved administrative ability and constructive genius, inheres in the national psychology. The nation has grown by booms and we love to achieve our aims by drives. Mr Dewey in the course of his campaign for governor of New York gave much attention to the partnership between corrupt politics and crime, whereupon some of his opponents accused him of seeking to bewitch his hearers with stories of cops and robbers. It was not wholly an unjust accusation, but it was far from doing Mr Dewey harm. The nation is enormously interested in cops and robbers, in pursuit and capture. It may be the vigilante in the blood, but whatever the explanation, it is a commonplace that as a people we enact unenforceable laws and then take pride and delight in leading crusades against the lawlessness engendered by such unenforceable laws. This is largely the story of our vice crusades, as it was, on a nation-wide scale, the story of Prohibition. To be sure, Mr Dewey's war on the New York racketeer, the new type of murderous blackmailer who fastens like a leech on the nation's economic life, would not come under this head. On the other hand, Mr Dewey prosecuting a Tammany district leader for collusion with the lottery operators is a characteristic American event. We pass unenforceable laws against an enormously popular form of petty gambling. We know that the practical politicians are sure to make it a source of profit. We rejoice when the politicians are prosecuted for capitalizing an impossible law. In every way Mr Dewey's record is an American Constant.

CHAPTER XX

Test of War

FOR NATIONS as for individuals emergency is a probe of character. We have to record for the American people, with the rest of the world, two great ordeals in the space of half a generation. The years of the World War from its European beginnings in 1914, and the years of the great business depression which descended on this country in the Fall of 1929 were times that try men's souls. The war and the economic collapse were world wide in their sweep. For that very reason they serve admirably as a proof of national character. We observe how the different peoples respond to the same play of forces. We see special traits and experiences, special virtues and weaknesses, thrown upon the screen.

Let it be said at once, however, that no moral judgment is intended when we speak of tests of character or of nations put to the proof. It is not a question here whether the American people met the test of the World War or failed to do so; whether the American character measured up or did not measure up to the economic crisis. Our interest is entirely in the concrete nature of the American response. By virtue of their common humanity, America, England, France, Germany, Russia exhibited the same general reflexes to the impact of war or depression. But nations are also conditioned by their own special circumstances. War and depression evoked American reflexes, British reflexes, Russian and Japanese reflexes, in which their individual peculiarities were displayed.

The epic conflict in which the nations found themselves engulfed in the Summer of 1914 was not the first world war in modern times, but it was the first world war in three generations. When the armies clashed on the French border in the third week of August it was a few months short of a hundred years since Waterloo. In absolute numbers and

dimensions the last world war was beyond comparison the greatest struggle in which mankind has ever engaged. By relative standards of human effort and suffering, on the other hand, it does not occupy a lonely and blasted eminence in the tragic annals of the race. Its impact on the souls of men was determined in large measure by the fact that the horror broke on the world after a century of peace.

During the twenty-three years between 1792 and 1815, with an intermission perhaps of three years, there was a world war in progress. It was the era of the wars of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. For the greater part of the time virtually all of the European peoples were involved and the greater part of Europe was the scene of operations. It was a world war in the true sense, since Asia and Africa and America witnessed the duel. Napoleon fought under the shadow of the Pyramids and in Syria in the earlier phases of a virtually unbroken succession of events that came to include an American army under Andrew Jackson defeating a British army at New Orleans. In the world war of 1914-18 the French dead numbered close to 1,400,000. Estimates for the wars of 1792-1815 make the French losses anywhere from 1,500,000 to 3,000,000 dead, so that the huge sacrifices of the last world conflict are not unprecedented. Indeed, taking account of a French population in 1914 one and one half times as large as it was a century earlier, we have the loss of life after 1914 only one half as heavy as the price paid for the French Revolution and Napoleon. The obvious answer occurs that the bloodletting of the earlier period was spread over nearly a quarter of a century, whereas the carnage of the last world war was concentrated in the space of four years. Even then it is obvious that the Napoleonic ordeal and the last world war were strictly comparable experiences for the French people.

Before the French Revolution there was another world war, preceding the Revolution by only twenty-five years and directly leading up to the upheaval of 1789. This was the Seven Years' War, in its turn the culminating episode in a struggle between England and France extending over three quarters of a century. The Seven Years' War saw England and Prussia arrayed against France, Austria, Spain, Russia and Sweden. It was fought in the heart of Europe. It was fought in America where we know it as the French and Indian War. It drove the French from Canada and after a dozen years ushered in the American Revolution. It was fought in India. How completely it was a world war in its far-flung operations may be gauged from the brief textbook statement: "In 1762 Martinique, Havana, Manila fell into the hands of the English . . ." The West Indies and the Philippines were the remoter edges of a theater of

war which included Germany and Montreal where Montcalm and Wolfe met.

Frederick the Great estimated that in the Seven Years' War he lost one hundred and eighty thousand men. This is one tenth of the number of the German dead in the last world war, but Frederick's Prussia had only one fifteenth of the population of Germany in 1914, so that in human toll the Frederician state paid one and a half times as heavily for a victorious war as Germany in our own time paid for a lost war. The figures do not bear out the common belief that the wastage of war increased with the introduction of universal military service by the French revolutionaries. It is usually said that before they created the Nation in Arms war was the business of a professional soldiery. Battles were fought by comparatively small numbers of men who obtained decisions which profoundly affected the fortunes of the civilian population, without greatly obtruding on the daily lives of the masses. This is a mistaken notion. Frederick's war dead, to the extent of four per cent of his country's population, must have come ultimately from the Prussian people, as the three per cent of German war dead in the last war came from the German people. One in every five Prussian households paid toll to Frederick's undertakings against one in every eight German homes which contributed a life to William II's enterprise. The fact is that when an old-style war, fought by professional armies, attained the dimensions of a general European war it had virtually the character of a nation in arms. Men were pressed for service. The professional armies lived on the land, at first through the king's formal requisitions and in straiter circumstances by pillage. The Seven Years' War cut down Prussia's civilian population by a tenth. A hundred and twenty-five years earlier, in the Thirty Years' War, the population of Bohemia was reduced from four million souls to less than a million, and the Palatinate suffered almost as badly.

The fact remains that all these grim precedents were to the people of Europe in 1914 only written history. For a century there had been no general war. The last large-scale war on the Continent, the Russo-Turkish conflict, was thirty-five years back in a corner of Europe. The last war in Western Europe was the Franco-German conflict forty-five years back, in which a decision was registered in seven weeks. The latest big war of any kind was only ten years back, in 1904-05, but it was fought in Manchuria and it concerned only Russia in the family of European peoples.

2

But there was one war of the nineteenth century which does rival the World War in duration and sacrifices, and that is our own Civil War. It is an impressive thought that of all the great Powers who fought in the World War—excluding Japan, whose efforts were of the very smallest—America, the nation whom the flames seared most lightly, was the one nation with a vivid memory of a general war on the scale of 1914. At the outbreak of the World War there may have been in all Europe a few hundred aged people born in the year of Waterloo, and there was in all probability not a single person to whom Waterloo was a childhood memory. The Civil War is even today a living experience for the American people. Appomattox lay exactly halfway in time between Waterloo and the torpedoing of the *Lusitania*. In 1915 millions of Americans were alive whom the Civil War had actually touched. The country as a whole had been tested as sorely by the Civil War as Europe was tried by the fires of the World War. It is true that our dead in the World War numbered approximately one hundred and twenty-five thousand against a wastage ten to fifteen times as great for the other chief belligerents, but we did have in our easily remembered past a war in which our casualties loomed as big as those of France or Germany after 1914.

The parallel between our Civil War and the World War of 1914 is a close one in respect to duration, to size of the armies involved, to the destruction of life and wealth. The war from Sumter to Appomattox was shorter than the World War by only a few months. Together the North and the South mobilized three million men, which was ten per cent of the population of the country. In the World War the belligerents mobilized sixty million men out of a total population of five hundred million, which is about twelve per cent. Our dead in the Civil War, to the number of almost six hundred thousand, were two per cent of the population of the country. In the World War the toll of 8,500,000 dead would be only one and one half per cent of the populations involved. The heaviest price was paid by the two ancient rivals, France and Germany, whose dead were two and one half per cent of their populations, and Austria was not far behind. Even then our Civil War toll is very close, and in one respect our Civil War sacrifices were highest of all. Of the Americans called to arms in 1861-65 fewer returned from the battlefield than for any nation in the World War. Our dead were eighteen per cent of our mobilized forces, nearly one man in every five. The World War dead were for Britain, one in every ten mobilized men, and for

Russia and Austria one in seven. Only France and Germany with a mortality rate of seventeen per cent of their mobilized forces paid the same price in lives that the North and South did.

The destruction of wealth shows a startling similarity. The cost of the Civil War has been estimated at eight billion dollars, and the national wealth of the United States at its outbreak was sixteen billion dollars. Thus the war between the states consumed one half of their possessions. The national wealth of Great Britain at the outbreak of the World War was estimated at eighty billion dollars. At the end of the war the British public debt, practically representing the cost of the war, stood at thirty-seven billion dollars, and if we add the debt to the United States we have Britain's war bill mounting up to just one half of her national wealth. Great Britain paid for the World War exactly what America paid for the Civil War in treasure, and Great Britain after 1914 paid less than America did in human life after 1861.

3

On the face of the record it would be America's fate to become involved in every world war, from whatever cause arising. We have seen that there have been three such far-flung wars in the lifetime of this nation, if we stretch our reckoning by some years to include the first of these—the Seven Years' War or our own French and Indian War. It ended in 1763, a dozen years before the beginning of the American Revolution, but it is so closely connected with that epochal event that we may justifiably call it part of our national era. Not all the historians agree that the expulsion of the French from Canada in 1763 made our Revolutionary War inevitable by removing the French threat to Colonial aspirations; yet it is hard to escape the close sequence of events in the years from the Treaty of Paris in 1763 to Lexington and Concord in 1775. In a real sense America was involved in this first world war.

The second world war in our national lifetime, the wars of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic empire, found us actually involved after prolonged years of painful neutrality. We very nearly went in on the side of France in the last year of George Washington's lifetime. We did go in, under pressure from Henry Clay and the trans-Allegheny frontier, against England three years before Waterloo. President Washington's solemn warning against entangling alliances may be said to voice a national aspiration which has never been realized in fact. The Farewell Address was pronounced by the man who as a youth of twenty-two made his debut in history with General Braddock at Fort Duquesne, that is

to say, in a world war. He achieved immortality in a war which America won with the aid of French troops and French money, a war which after Saratoga furnished another chapter in the historic world-wide duel between France and Great Britain. After Waterloo there was a period of a hundred years in which America was not involved in European quarrels because there were no European quarrels on the grand scale.

Such is the record. It will hardly do to explain away the French and Indian War as not really arising out of American interests but only as one phase of a quarrel between England and France. Americans fought and died in that quarrel. It does not get to the heart of the question that Henry Clay "took" us into the War of 1812, even as one hundred and some years later any number of individuals and interests have been identified as "taking" us into the World War. The complexities of 1917 are on a par with the complex motives that historians find for the War of 1812. The truth would seem to be, even if it sounds like fatalism, that history will always find somebody to "take" this country into a world war. From this it would follow that the alleged "takers" are only the instruments of destiny and not its cause. America has avoided entangling alliances in the technical sense, but she has not escaped the consequences attached to being a very important member in the family of nations.

4

It was destined that America should enter the war on the side of the Allies because the reasons that brought her into the war did not arise out of the war. They lay in history and in present necessity. America did not enter the war under the siren spell of British propaganda, or to safeguard our bankers' loans to the Allies, or even on account of the Lusitania. We have seen that the American people was involved in the two earlier world wars of the eighteenth and the nineteenth century, at a time when America counted for ever so much less in the world; and if we could not escape sharing in the latest world conflict it obviously could be on only one side. The United States cast in its fortunes with the Allies primarily because of William Shakespeare and John Bunyan and Magna Carta and General Lafayette. This explanation sounds far less artless, not to say juvenile, a full twenty years after the Armistice than it would have sounded ten years earlier. The decade after the Versailles peace saw a savage criticism directed against the forces and motives which drew America into the war. The stirring slogans of the time, democracy and the self-determination of peoples, were dismissed as hypocrisy or infantilism. The chief compulsion which took us into the

war was the Profit Motive and the principal instrument it employed was Propaganda. But the rise of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich and the forward sweep of totalitarianism and dictatorship in the world made it much easier for the younger generation to understand the real motives that operated in 1917. Fascism's challenge to democracy in the Presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt made it much harder to be satirical about Woodrow Wilson's effort to make the world safe for democracy.

Sentiment brought the United States to the aid of the British Commonwealth. Practical considerations might have counseled us to stay out of the war and accept the defeat of the Allies and the breakup of the British Empire with equanimity if not with actual satisfaction. The United States would have been the gainer by such an outcome. We would have inherited great areas of the British Empire and would have succeeded to the unchallenged headship of the English-speaking peoples. No doubt there were Americans who felt that if the Allies were beaten it would be our turn next. Long after the Armistice we were frequently reminded by our late Allies that they were fighting our cause for us while we hesitated for nearly three years. They held the line at bitter cost to themselves while we were getting ready, and getting ready much more slowly than we should have done if we had really understood how gravely our own interests were involved. But it was not fear for ourselves that brought us into the war. After all, this "next" which confronted us at the hands of a victorious Germany was sufficiently remote under the worst of circumstances and did not exist even as a remote possibility for the great majority of the American people. America yielded to the pull of kinship, not of the blood but of the common language and a common heritage of ideals and memories. In the early months of 1930 Secretary of State Stimson was the head of our delegation at an international conference in London. Our representatives spent a week end as the guests of Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald on a tour of the historic countryside in Buckinghamshire. They visited Milton's cottage at Chalfont, where "L'Allegro" and "Lycidas" were written; the grave of William Penn at Jordan's; the grave of Edmund Burke at Buckingham. The newspaper dispatches said that at the end of the day's journey Mr Stimson exclaimed: "To me this is sacred ground!" Now it would be idle to enter upon a refined discussion of the geographical distribution of pro-Ally sentiment in the United States before we entered the war; to suggest that Anglomania might be strong on the Atlantic seaboard and among our prosperous classes, but constituted a negligible element in the Middle West which is the heart of America. Secretary Stimson may have been a representative of our alleged pro-

English upper classes in the Eastern states, but after all he spoke the same English language that is spoken in Indiana, Kansas and on the Pacific coast; and when he said English ground hallowed by Bunyan and Milton and Gray he was at one with the Kansas and Missouri schoolmarms who flock to Stratford-on-Avon and to Dr Johnson's Cheshire Cheese tavern with Cook's guides on their Summer vacations.

In the late Fall of 1938 our ambassador in London was Joseph P. Kennedy. By virtue of his Irish blood and as spokesman for an administration far from subservient to America's upper classes, he should have been secure against the inroads of Anglomania to which Woodrow Wilson's ambassador in London, Walter H. Page, is supposed to have fallen a victim with the result that Mr Page helped greatly to "take" us into the World War. But in the troubled and angry days that followed the Czechoslovak crisis and the Munich Pact of September 1938 Ambassador Kennedy was impelled to make a public address in London so strongly sympathetic to British government policy that it brought forth the accusation at home that he, too, had fallen a victim to London's social blandishments. Rather than believe that two American ambassadors of such widely different antecedents as Walter H. Page in 1914 and Joseph P. Kennedy in 1938 fell victim to the same insidious British poison, we are compelled to say that the operating force is not British guile but something lying deeper in the history of the English-speaking peoples.

America's entrance into the war in response to the pull of kinship is consonant with the general play of forces that brought on the world conflict. Kinship looms big among the causes of the World War under the better-known name of Nationalism. The senseless and brutal extremes to which the doctrine of Nationalism has been carried by the Fascist dictatorships must not be allowed to blind us to the valid claims of a movement which has so largely determined the course of modern history and especially since the French Revolution. Among the causes of the World War the rivalry between Great Britain and the oncoming Germany of the Hohenzollerns has too often been allowed to obscure the simple fact that the tragedy was precipitated by the assassination of a Germanic prince in a Balkan town by a Slav youth enflamed by nationalist ideals. The historians came nearer to the heart of the matter when, in their apportionment of war-guilt, they made Austria and Russia the two principal culprits. It would then be another phase in the historic duel between Germandom and Slavdom, and not the last phase if the Third Reich continues to move in the direction set by Adolf Hitler.

The nationalist movements of the nineteenth century brought liberation and unification to Italy, unification to Germany, the beginning of liberation to the Slav peoples of the Balkans. The last process was virtually completed, as against Turkey, in the first decade of the present century, and Slav nationalism lost no time in turning its attention north to the Hapsburg monarchy where something like twenty million "race-brethren" lived under Germanic or Magyar domination. Over the stretch of more than half a century the Slav peoples of the Balkans in their struggle against Turkey had looked to Russia as their protector, and Russia was glad to play the role, though for motives that went beyond the pull of racial kinship. For the Czars the defense of the Balkan Slavs was secondary to Muscovite aspirations for Constantinople; but ulterior motives in high places did not militate against a sincere Slavic patriotism in Russia's articulate classes.

It did not enter the mind of the Russian autocracy, or in any event it did not disrupt its complacency, that by championing the cause of Slavic freedom in the Balkans and against Hapsburg rule Russia was setting up an example for her own Polish subjects. Autonomy for Poland was a concession which the Czar found it necessary to make at the very beginning of the World War. The restoration and independence of Poland had a prominent place in Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, but in the principle of self-determination was involved the liberation of all the Slav peoples. At the outbreak of the war the European national minorities living under alien rule numbered about seventy million. After the peace treaties the new minorities numbered perhaps twenty million. The outstanding change wrought by the peace treaties was the creation of two new Slav states—Poland and Czechoslovakia with a Slav population, in both, of some thirty-five million, and an augmented Serbia or Yugoslavia with a gain of five million Slavs.

5

We have been some time coming back to our thesis that a force stronger than economics brought the United States into the war on the side of the Allies. We came in primarily because of a sense of close kinship with England—because the fall of Great Britain raised for most Americans the picture of a world which their hearts rejected. England's cause against Germany was the cause of the democratic way of life against the militarist and despotic life.

Sympathy for France helped to bring us into the war, not by way of repayment for Lafayette but out of a sense of kinship for French

democracy. American opinion was with the Germans against the French in 1870 when we were forty-five years nearer to the memory of Lafayette; but in that year France was an empire under a Napoleon and the Prussian cause was the cause of national unification and self-determination. The first Russian Revolution, in March 1917, relieved the Allied cause of a moral drag weight, the alliance with autocracy. When the Czar fell in March 1917 the Allies became the champions of democracy in Russia as well as in England and France. It was all well enough after the event to laugh at Woodrow Wilson and his world made safe for democracy, but it was easier to see in 1939 than in 1929 that the Allies did after all fight for democracy. Defeat for the Allies would have meant the end of the French Republic, and we can only speculate on what defeat would have done to the British Commonwealth of Nations.

6

The test of the Melting Pot is naturally to be sought in a time of national emergency. Such a test presented itself twice within a period of less than twenty years with the World War and the Depression. In both instances we have to ask whether the foreign-born and their descendants comported themselves like Americans, or whether the day of trial found them marked off from the mass of their countrymen in loyalties, temperament and behavior.

The United States declared war against Germany on April 6, 1917, two years and eight months after the outbreak of hostilities in Europe. That intervening period of troubled neutrality was marked by sharp divergences of opinion in the country. In the course of the prolonged debate a great deal was heard about the shame and danger of national disunity as revealed in racial blocs, sectionalism and other signs of cleavage. How sharply the lines were drawn we know from the Presidential campaign of 1916, in which Woodrow Wilson won re-election by the miraculous margin of a few thousand votes in California and other close victories in rock-ribbed Republican states. It does not concern our present theme that Woodrow Wilson in 1916 made great inroads in Republican territory on the issue of keeping out of war and that in less than six months he found himself driven to declare war on Germany. The plebiscite of November 1916 revealed a very close division of sentiment on America's entering the war, but it was not cleavage on racial lines. The division was not by race but by geography. German votes may have helped to swing Nebraska to Woodrow Wilson as the antiwar candidate, but we are not compelled to make that assumption for a state with

a normally strong Democratic party. The German-American element was inconsiderable in Kansas or in Washington or in California, which broke away from their ancient Republican allegiance. The strong German influence in Wisconsin was not enough to give the state to Woodrow Wilson. It is written on the face of the 1916 returns that opposition to entanglement in Europe increased directly with the distance from Europe. A few thousand votes in Oregon saved the Pacific coast from going solid for Woodrow Wilson. If it is regrettable that the American people in 1916 should have been so closely divided in a great emergency it was not the fault of the Melting Pot.

War against Germany was declared by a vote of eighty-two to six in the Senate and three hundred and seventy-three to fifty in the House of Representatives. For the joint membership of Congress it was a ratio of nearly nine to one in favor of war. The vote in the Senate may have reflected some slight measure of German sentiment. At least we can read that much, if we insist, in the opposing votes of Senators La Follette of Wisconsin, Norris of Nebraska and Stone of Missouri. But the influence of German constituents could have had nothing to do with Vardaman of Mississippi, Lane of Oregon or even Gronna of North Dakota. The opposition was sectional and historical. To the senators from Oregon and North Dakota Europe was too far away. The senator from Mississippi may have remembered the Revolutionary War and shrunk from becoming an ally of George III's successor.

The fact that a minority of one in ten in Congress did vote against going to war with Germany soon came to be cited as a blasting revelation of national disunity. Temperamental observers permitted themselves to speak of a world war coming along to illuminate in a blinding flash the conflict of loyalties and purposes beneath the surface of American life. Such strong expressions were based presumably on the assumption that the verdict of the American people in a great emergency should always be unanimous, and that the vote in Congress should have been one hundred per cent in favor of the declaration of war asked by President Wilson. With this state of mind there are two reasons for taking issue. The first has already been indicated. Assuming that a war opposition in Congress of roughly ten per cent is unnatural and a sign of national disunity, the cause in 1917 was not the failure of the Melting Pot. It was American self-sufficiency rather than hyphenism that swung the fifty-six opposition votes in Congress. And if we say that a certain measure of pro-German feeling did enter it still leaves the Melting-Pot doctrine untouched. When people spoke of the Melting Pot, the assimilation of the immigrant into American life, they always had in mind the

"newer" immigration which began in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It was the newcomers from Central, Southern and Eastern Europe who because of "race" and religion were supposed to be unfit raw material for American citizenship. Such doubts did not apply to the German and Irish immigrants of an earlier invasion, whose value as raw material for American life had long ceased to be questioned. In our new immigration policy after the war, with its system of quotas based on "national origins," the Germans and the Irish suffered no decrease. Yet hyphenism in war days was synonymous with German-Americanism, reinforced by a certain measure of Irish-American sentiment hostile to Great Britain.

It is pertinent to recall how it stood with domestic unity in the case of the Allies, where the reasons for complete singleness of purpose and sentiment would be ever so much more compelling than with us. Great Britain did not enter the war in a mood of perfect harmony. Great Britain hesitated for several crucial days, and when it finally decided to throw in its fortunes with France three Cabinet ministers resigned in protest. In the House of Commons the Labor leader, Ramsay MacDonald, spoke against a declaration of war with the support of a minority of the Labor members; and though the future three-times prime minister retired from Parliament and was the object of much bitter criticism for his unpatriotic attitude his case is enough to show that there can be an alleged lack of patriotism that is not rooted in foreign birth. Throughout the war Bernard Shaw exercised a freedom of speech in criticizing British aims and motives which would not have been tolerated in this country. So in Germany the voting of war funds was opposed by a considerable section of the Socialist party, the later Independent Socialists, and in France there was an element represented by Joseph Caillaux and Louis Malvy which favored an understanding with Germany. When such diversity of sentiment is found among the original belligerents it is absurd to say that in the United States, three to six thousand miles away, a difference of opinion on the expediency of going to war in Europe must be regarded as an unnatural phenomenon and proof of an ominous national disunity.

When all the factors in the situation are weighed it may yet emerge that the American people in the war displayed a closer approach to unanimity than any of the belligerent nations where public opinion was free to express itself. This was particularly the case after we entered the war; and it is all the more remarkable because we had a problem which none of the other belligerent nations had to consider: we did have this large population of "foreign" stock of which the two largest and most

important groups might humanly regard a war against Germany and for England with something less than average enthusiasm. There is nothing to show that the German-Americans in the American army or on the home front permitted any sentiment for the Fatherland which they may have felt to interfere with their complete loyalty to their new country. And the Irish element did not permit the traditional hostility to Great Britain seriously to inject itself into what had become America's quarrel.

The marvel of the war is how little active disunity manifested itself. America's cause was the cause of all Americans—old stock, new stock and foreign-born. Only if we set out from the thesis that a nation of one hundred and fifteen million people, as we were in 1917, cannot tolerate the slightest divergence in sentiment or opinion in wartime, will the acts of a few malcontents, the protests of a handful of conscientious objectors, become a subject for alarm and despair. Perfect concord of group thought and feeling has never been attained and never can be attained when we are dealing with more than a handful of people. Probably there has never been a primitive tribe of a few hundred souls in which, on the question of war and peace, there was not a war party and an antiwar party; or in which, when war was decided upon, there was not a division of opinion on war strategy and domestic policy. There was a peace party among the Sioux Indians before the Custer campaign in 1876.

It is in the fraternal, co-operative spirit of the American people to let emotion in the course of a crusade demand a perfect unity which our better judgment should tell us cannot be realized. We tend to make a crime of nonconformity in cases where the crisis does not exist or the nonconformists are negligible in number. After the World War we remained for some time in a state of panic over Red perils. We expelled Socialist members from the New York Legislature because four years earlier the numerically insignificant Socialist party had opposed our entering the war. The fact that this purge of Socialist assemblymen should have occurred in the state with the largest foreign population really proves that the Melting Pot was working very well indeed. New York's millions of foreign-born had assimilated the traditional American belief in compulsory unanimity of thought and feeling.

The magnitude of our war effort is summarized in something more than four million men mobilized, more than two million men carried

overseas and the expenditure in the course of four years, 1917-20, of forty-five billion dollars, paid for partly in loans partly by current appropriations. The national debt in 1916 was one and a quarter-billion dollars, and in 1919 it was nearly twenty-six billion. The transportation of two million men over three thousand miles of sea is obviously unique in military history. The money cost, though representing a mighty effort, will not compare with the showing in our own Civil War, when, as we have seen, we consumed one half of the nation's wealth. In the World War we spent one seventh or one eighth of our wealth. But we must remember the incomparably greater stakes in 1861-65, when we were engaged in a struggle for national existence, even as the Allies were in 1914-18. For us the World War came at second hand and had a much remoter value. Comparing what we spent and what we had at stake in the Civil War and in the World War, the latter effort would be the greater of the two.

The money costs of the World War did not stop with the Armistice. Interest payments on the national debt stretch into the indefinite future. The pension problem is formidable. In 1937 we had on the pension rolls two widows of the War of 1812 and more than two hundred pensioners of the war with Mexico in 1846-47. In January 1936 Congress overrode by a vote of four to one in the Senate and five to one in the House a Presidential veto of the Soldier's Bonus Bill which distributed bonds to the amount of \$1,728,000,000 in final settlement of the World War compensation claims established by acts of Congress after the Armistice. More than 3,500,000 men and women were qualified bond recipients. Between our two stipendiaries of the War of 1812 and these 3,500,000 beneficiaries of the World War stretches one of the great constants of American life, namely, the war pensioner.

It is a tradition which goes back to Colonial times when some form of provision was made for disabled Indian fighters or their survivors. A promise of half-pay for life to officers of the American Revolution was never redeemed and it threatened to precipitate a military uprising before the treaty of peace was signed. Congress in 1792 did grant pensions and land bounties in lieu of the promised half-pay. In 1818 the pension for service instead of actual disability was introduced and became a permanent feature of our public life.

The history of Civil War pensions bids fair to be repeated on a greater scale in the case of our World War veterans. The "final" liquidation of the nation's debt of gratitude in the Bonus Act of 1936 does not carry the promise of finality. War service has come to mean the mere act of enlistment without proof of actual service. Physical disability by succes-

sive extensions has come to mean any illness manifesting itself years after the Armistice. The definition of a war veteran's dependants may grow more inclusive with the years. Pensions for the widows of World War veterans, regardless of the date of marriage, were in the air when the Sixty-Sixth Congress convened in January 1939.

Especially may we expect the war-pension idea to spread because of notable developments in the whole field of social security. Theoretically it should work the other way. Unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, emergency unemployment relief and minor forms of protection should do away with the necessity of war pensions. But it is a safe conjecture that long habit plus the good heart of politicians will manage to keep the military-service pension operating side by side with civilian social security. The nation's gratitude to its soldiers over and above the nation's duty to its workers will be stressed. The higher claim of the widow of the man who went to the front for his country over the widow of the man who stayed at home safe and reveled in high war wages will be asserted; even if the widow was born long after the Armistice. For this there are precedents in all our earlier wars.

8

America's part in the making of the peace has two phases. One concerns our activities at the Peace Conference. The other has to do with our retreat from the new European order and our so-called retirement into isolation.

Criticism of the peace treaties has not always shown full understanding of the circumstances under which the treaties were written. In the second place, criticism has not always revealed a full knowledge of the contents of the peace treaties, strange though it may seem to say this of a subject around which a vast debate has raged and an enormous literature has grown up. American newspaper editorials the day after the publication of the German treaty called it a Carthaginian peace, and the theme of a victor's peace, a vindictive peace, in place of the expected peace without victory, has been sounded ever since.

The emotional atmosphere in which the peace treaties were written quickly came to be described as a state of shell shock among the victor nations; but not always were the logical implications of that vivid descriptive term given due recognition. If shell shock it was, then it is obviously beside the point to blame the authors of the peace for failing to behave like normal human beings. If it is true that the treaties were written by men crazed with blood losses and blood lust then the crimes

and errors of Versailles become of minor importance. The real question would be whether the treaties left the door open to healthier and saner second thought, whether the treaties provided the opportunity and the machinery for their own amendment and revision.

We ask too much of human nature when we expect the victor nations after four and a half years of slaughter and spiritual agony to embrace the vanquished in a common confession of guilt, like a warm gush of tears after a lovers' quarrel. It is a familiar story how President Wilson in Europe only a few weeks after the Armistice found the old wicked human heart at work. It is much nearer the facts to say that he found human weakness. There was no doubt hate, too, but the fear was stronger than the hate. There was the desire to punish, but the thirst for security was greater than the lust for vengeance.

To this state of mind in a Europe just emerged from the purgatory of war must be added the fact that it was a continent threatened by another kind of war, namely, class war and social revolution. The Western front no longer shook under the fire of heavy guns, but there were months in the Winter and Spring of 1919, when the Paris Conference was in session, when the ground seemed threatening to give way under the feet of the nations. The peacemakers at Paris worked against the Bolshevik background—the civil war in Russia, the unsuccessful Communist coup in Bavaria, the temporarily successful Communist stroke in Hungary, the Spartacist uprisings in Germany. When M. Clemenceau demanded a sanitary cordon against Communist Russia he was not wholly the spiteful old man of legend. He represented a very real and widespread fear at the Peace Conference. American reporters at Paris in the Winter of 1918-19 were asking when would the revolution break out—in England! The ordinary thing to say at the Peace Conference was that it was a race between Woodrow Wilson and Lenin.

Shell-shocked men on a quaking ground for the most part wrote the Treaty of Versailles, and it is to the credit of America's representatives that the final terms were not harder on the defeated countries. Our delegates at Paris saw more clearly and justly because they had suffered much less and, most important of all, because they were not afraid. In return for a joint promise of aid by the United States and Great Britain against a future attack by Germany the French gave up their demand for possession of the left bank of the Rhine. Against grotesquely inflated British and French reparation claims the Americans stressed the question of Germany's capacity to pay, and though vast sums were stipulated in the treaty a compromise really left the question

to the future. It may be noted, as one illustration of complexity and confusion at Versailles, that the reparations bill was increased by including Allied war pensions, and this was done at the instance of General Smuts, an outstanding Liberal figure of the postwar era. So thick was the fog of illusion and motive in which men groped at Paris.

Woodrow Wilson could make concessions to the shell-shocked European peacemakers which he could not have made without the League of Nations. If pride of authorship was behind his insistence on incorporating the League Covenant into the peace treaties there was also understanding of the heart of the matter. The purpose of the League was not solely to ward off another world war but to accelerate the liquidation of the last one. The League Covenant was such an instrument of sober second thought as a peace treaty written by shell-shocked men, vindictive men, frightened men, needed. The oppressive provisions of the treaty would be modified and its impractical clauses repealed through the agency of the League when war wounds had healed and fears abated. These things did come to pass with or without the League. The astronomical reparations imposed on Germany were successively cut down and finally abandoned. The temporary occupations of German territory were terminated ahead of time. The frontier plebiscites were duly executed. The war-guilt issue was permitted to fade out. These changes would have been made sooner and other concessions to a vanquished Germany granted if the same American hand that edited the original Versailles document for the better had not sabotaged the machinery of peace which America had built. The appeasement of Europe would have been hastened and the postwar democratic regime in Germany strengthened if Woodrow Wilson had not allowed pride of opinion to destroy America's partnership for world peace. The United States Senate failed to ratify the Versailles Treaty by six votes short of the necessary two thirds. If President Wilson had acquiesced in the Lodge reservations the treaty would surely have been ratified and the tripartite French security pact would probably have been accepted. Even without this latter treaty America's presence in the League would have given France that feeling of security which constituted her basic peace demand. In any event our presence would have helped to relieve the tensions and crises of the half-dozen years between the Armistice and the Dawes Reparations settlement of 1924.

We have outlined the case as commonly presented by friends of the League of Nations. In their eyes America's rejection of the League was a betrayal and a calamity. Moral judgments do not here concern us.

Of the concrete results following upon America's withdrawal, as we have just summed them up, it may be said that they deal, after all, with possibilities and in divers instances with probabilities. We cannot speak with certainty. We are far from being in a position to say confidently what the twenty years after the Armistice would have been if the United States had ratified the Versailles Treaty and entered the League.

First of all it must be recalled that the United States refused to join the League but did not withdraw from European affairs. This country may be said to have taken a leading role in the progressive solution of the reparations problem as forced to the front by the French invasion of the Ruhr in 1923. The two successive reparations settlements bear the names of two Americans, Dawes and Young. The settlements represented a marked approach to the ideas of the American financial experts at the Peace Conference. An American citizen became Agent-General of Reparations under the Dawes Plan.

Our direct contribution to the rebuilding of Central Europe was made in the form of loans and investments. In after years it became the ordinary thing to say that Germany had paid her reparations installments, over a period of nearly a decade, with foreign loans. The great German building boom after the war was in considerable measure financed by American loans. When the business collapse of 1929 came to make us a wiser as well as a sadder nation there were many in the United States to remind us that our soaring exports before the crash had been largely bought with the money which we had loaned to our foreign customers, among whom Germany held a prominent place. That is why we are justified in saying that our absence from the League and our independent diplomatic position, which prevented us from sending delegates to European conferences but permitted us to send "official observers," were far from being tantamount to turning our back on Europe's needs. We made a very solid contribution to European rehabilitation after the Armistice.

Would the face of Europe and the world outlook twenty years after the Armistice, say in the Winter of 1939, have been different if the United States had been a member of the League of Nations? We cannot be too sure. World affairs in the period after the Munich Pact were the product of something more than international rivalry in the ordinary sense. Ideas as well as nations were arrayed against each other. Italian troops fighting in a Spanish civil war; Japan waging war deep in the heart of China; the Berlin-Rome dictator partnership breeding new fears of a world conflagration—these things were more than the old-style international problems with which a League of Nations that

included the United States could have dealt effectively. The first dozen years after the Armistice were shaped by the Russian Revolution as well as by the World War. The second decade after the Armistice, the years after 1929, saw a third great force come into play in the form of world-wide economic collapse.

We have said that the peacemakers at Versailles were compelled to do their work with the ground of Europe quaking under their feet from the impact of Bolshevik Russia. But the authors of the League of Nations hardly thought of Bolshevism as a permanent problem. Social revolution was an aftermath of the war, and with the lapse of time the revolutionary ground swell would subside. The League was designed as a recourse against the world's ancient rivalries, the feud between nation and nation. Its framers did not foresee how much more difficult the problem would become with class war cutting across national frontiers. It would have been hard enough to keep international enmities in check, but the peace of Europe no longer depended merely on removing external frictions. The peace of Europe could be thwarted and wrecked by internal strains.

Not to be forgotten is the unhappy fact that the League of Nations in its early years was exceedingly unpopular for the very reason that it strove toward international stability and the preservation of world peace. Among such opponents we do not include those sincere persons who were outraged by the terms of the peace treaties, who called it not a League of Nations but a league of victors, and who described its chief purpose as the maintenance, not of peace, but of the status quo set up in the peace treaties. There were other critics of the League who had in mind a different status quo from that of 1914. They were thinking of the whole economic and social system, whose doom they held to have been sounded by the World War and whose designated successor was already in the field—in Soviet Russia. Here at home the League of Nations was opposed by conservatives in revolt against idealism and other "isms," but also by Liberal spirits who did not want a League of Nations to take up the defense of a decaying social order against the new promise in Russia.

It may be argued, therefore, in mitigation of America's refusal to enter the League of Nations, that in all likelihood our presence in the League would not have made a vital difference. The problem was too complicated. The forces unleashed by the Bolshevik Revolution had to work themselves out. It was not the Treaty of Versailles that raised Adolf Hitler to power but the class-war issue, powerfully seconded by world-wide economic collapse. The burdens and disabilities of Ver-

sailles were rapidly vanishing in the very years preceding Hitler's triumph—reparations, foreign occupation, exclusion from the League of Nations, the whole scheme of an outlaw nation. There was certainly far less reason for a humiliated Germany to throw itself into Hitler's arms in 1932 than there had been ten years earlier. And the fact is that as late as 1928 the Hitler forces elected only twelve deputies in a Reichstag of nearly five hundred members. Two years later, in September 1930, they elected one hundred and seven members. The economic collapse was beginning to make itself felt in a rise of German unemployment, and the militancy of the German Communists enabled Hitler to stress the defense of civilization against the Red peril.

The last Chancellor of a democratic Germany, Heinrich Bruening, fought a desperate battle against the Hitler forces supported by the Communists. The two deadly rivals voted together against the democratic regime. Had the German Communists discovered the virtues of the United Front a few years sooner than they did German democracy might have survived. But in 1932 Communists in the world still considered themselves the destined beneficiaries of chaos, and they worked with might and main to overthrow German democracy. Primarily it was the world depression that undermined German democracy. The same elemental force brought about in England far-reaching political and fiscal changes and, here at home, the crushing defeat of the Republican party. Our own New Deal in the person of Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated on March 4, 1933—just one day before the Reichstag election which confirmed Adolf Hitler in the Chancellorship to which he was appointed by President Hindenburg on January 30. The Treaty of Versailles had little to do with the outcome. The presence of America on the scene would not have swung the course of events. Things were in the saddle.

Therefore, when all is said and done, we have no reason to speak of the "sorry" role of the United States in the postwar settlements and subsequently in the administration of the Peace. Our intervention in the war was a crusade in behalf of a way of life which we saw challenged by Germany. We contributed heavily to the Allied victory and we exercised a moderating influence on the terms of peace. That we could have done more than we did for the reconciliation of the nations and the rebuilding of a shattered world order is problematical. In any event our rejection of the duty or the opportunity embodied in the League of Nations is not to be regarded as a characteristic example of American juvenility and light-mindedness. In rejecting Woodrow Wilson and his works, in succumbing to a sudden weariness of idealist knight-errantry,

we exhibited only a too common human trait. France owed an inestimable debt to Clemenceau for his courage and resourcefulness in the darkest hour, but within a year after the Armistice the French people refused their Father of Victory the office of President of the Republic. His collaborator in victory, Lloyd George, lasted longer than Clemenceau but he, too, was rejected within three or four years after the Armistice. No doubt it could be said of both men that they were much better qualified to win a war than to rule a peaceful nation, but the simple fact is that their countrymen were tired of Clemenceau and Lloyd George. And if the English, who are more steadfast or more stubborn in their loyalties than we are, grew tired of Lloyd George it is in the nature of things that the United States should have grown tired of Woodrow Wilson and his adventure in idealism. It was in the final effect a gesture of weariness and impatience and not of desertion. We have seen that America did not really withdraw from the responsibilities of the peace, and for the very good reason that she could not if she would. More than twenty years after the Armistice this truth stood out clearly.

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CHAPTER XXI

Depression

IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTER we dealt with the World War as a test of the American people. In the present chapter we intend to make the same detailed examination of American behavior in a business depression now ten years old. The salient fact in this story of a decade of economic prostration is that the blow fell most heavily upon the richest country in the world, actually and potentially. In the United States we had achieved a living standard far above the reach of other nations; we boasted of natural resources and of accumulated wealth easily first in the world. But we have been more severely tried than any other great nation. The case may be summed up for the moment in a single vivid item: unemployment. In March 1933, when Franklin D. Roosevelt began his first term in the White House, the number of unemployed wage earners in the country was estimated at nearly fourteen million. Two years later this figure for March 1933 was revised upward to nearly seventeen million in an estimate used by the Roosevelt administration as a basis of calculation in shaping its policies. In this same depression British unemployment at its height touched the figure of only three million. Germany, for a short period in the troubled months preceding the fall of the Weimar republic and the advent of the Nazi regime, had as many as six million people out of work. These figures mean that at the lowest estimate for March 1933 we had, relatively to our population, nearly twice as many people out of work as Great Britain, and one and a quarter as many as Germany. At the higher estimate for March 1933 we had proportionally more than twice as many idle workers as Great Britain and one and a half times as many as Germany. Thereupon we recall that Great Britain had been

described ever since the World War, if not indeed ever since the beginning of the century, as a nation past its industrial prime. Requiems were pronounced over the whole British economic system. Similarly we must think of Germany as a nation crippled by defeat in war, torn by internal conflict, even suspected of deliberately exaggerating its economic plight by overstating the number of its idle workers. Only then does one realize what it means that the richest country in the world, America of the traditional unlimited possibilities, should find herself in the matter of providing bread for her people twice as badly off as decadent England, nearly twice as badly off as a humbled and distracted Germany.

It is a paradox, but not without an answer. This country in 1929 fell harder than the other nations because it fell from a greater height. The shock was to our complacency no less than to our material well-being. From optimism unlimited we passed into a condition of despair, and this state of mind served to make material conditions worse. It was the fear of fear against which President Roosevelt rallied his countrymen in his first inaugural address.

We rallied more easily in material affairs than in our thinking. That our people should be troubled in spirit about the future was inevitable; but among large sections of our better-educated classes there manifested itself a strong desire to revise our past downward. It became the fashion to speak of things before 1929 not as a prosperous era that crashed, or even as a boom that collapsed, but as an illusion that was swept away. A soap bubble, not a system, had blown up. Perhaps it is inevitable that embittered men in bitter hard times shall look back upon a prosperity which failed to endure and call it a false prosperity. From this it is but a step to say that it was a false prosperity because it never existed. This indictment was facilitated by the undeniable fact that so much of our dazzling prosperity in the last two years of the mad Wall Street dance was indeed jerry-built. The huge stock-market profits which melted away overnight, the paper millionaires who sprang up like mushrooms, did provide a large part of the purchasing power reflected in more substantial though not more enduring evidences of prosperity. Because people scanned their Wall Street profits and thought themselves rich, they bought automobiles, new houses and yachts, fine clothes and fine trips to Europe; but they also cheerfully bonded themselves as taxpayers for schools and roads and town halls and recreation centers. The profits and wages which thus accrued to the producers of automobiles and to the construction industry and to the shipbuilders engaged in turning out de luxe ships for cruises—this prosperity, though it was not destined to last, certainly was not false in the sense of being nonexistent. The schools,

the roads, the playgrounds, the new homes for millions of working people, were not a hashish dream. They were real and remained so. It was a fictitious prosperity only in the sense that it drew too heavily on the credit of the future.

When all deductions have been made for the inflated prosperity of the last two years before the crash we are still far from the verdict of nullity against the whole structure of American well-being in 1929 which was pronounced after the crash by simple men in pain and fear or by critics with a special point of view. In the usual picture of the Old Order, as painted by hostile artists, we find a grave distortion of facts which must be corrected for two reasons at least. In the first place, we need the truth about things before 1929 so that we may understand the onset of the great depression. In the second place, we need the facts in order to understand and justly appraise the New Deal itself; to find the reason for its successes and its failures.

The point will bear restating that the economic hurricane of 1929 found the rest of the world better prepared for its impact than it found the United States. Depression fell upon other countries as the climax of a long illness reaching back to the World War. The other nations had become immune, or at least indurated, to hard times. They were thankful for small favors. Good times were good by comparison with very bad times still fresh in memory. But in this country the collapse came at the crest of a dazzling prosperity, and that is one reason why we were more ready to believe that the end of the world was in sight. We were the spoilt children of fortune, and adversity found us too soft. That pre-1929 prosperity, as we have just seen, was by no means wholly gamble and fraud, though a great part of it was boom. Calamity overtook us in the last year of a decade of extraordinary progress in national well-being.

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The fever chart and case history of the depression may now be presented in brief form. For the stock market we may note that in the year 1921 the New York *Times's* Annalist index of security prices stood at one hundred and ten. Four years later it had mounted to two hundred. Four years later still, in the early months of the year 1929, it stood at two hundred and eighty. It touched three hundred and forty before the crash of October 1929.

The descent was steeper than the rise. By the end of 1929, that is to say in two and a half months from the first big market break, the index had dropped to two hundred. It was a return to the level of the years

1925-26 and a decline of forty per cent from the 1929 peak. The index rose during the false dawn of early 1930 to two hundred and seventy, or very nearly the level at which the year 1929 had opened. In the middle of 1930 came the bad sinking spell which wrought greater havoc than the original crash of the preceding year. At the end of the year 1930 the market level was down to one hundred and fifty, but even this dizzy slide did not destroy all confidence. Early in 1931 the level rose to one hundred and eighty, so that people spoke of a promising lift of twenty per cent in stock values. But the later months of the year 1931, full of startling events abroad as well as here at home, saw the worst air pocket of the whole depression. The end of 1931 found the market index down to ninety. Security values had shrunk to one fifth of the highs of 1929, and the end was not yet in sight. The bottom of the depression was not to be scraped until the middle of 1932. At that time the average closing price for twenty-five selected industrial stocks recorded in the United States Abstract was ninety-four against three hundred and sixty-six in 1929. The average closing price for twenty-five railroads was twenty-two against one hundred and thirty-six in 1929. In the twenty-five selected industrial stocks there was, between the high of 1929 and the low of 1932, a drop from four hundred and seventy to fifty-eight. It was a shrinkage of eighty-seven per cent.

The curve of industrial production told the same tale as the stock market. From a basic one hundred at the beginning of 1928 production rose to one hundred and thirty in 1929 just before the break. It was back to ninety at the beginning of 1930, down to eighty at the beginning of 1931, to sixty at the beginning of 1932, and for the greater part of that year it hovered around fifty, with a downward lurch to thirty-five in the first months of 1933. It recoiled to eighty for a brief period in the middle of 1933, following upon the devalued dollar and in anticipation of the new N.R.A. codes establishing shorter hours and minimum wages. By the end of 1933 industrial production stood at sixty, and between that level and seventy it hovered for nearly two years until the beginning of a new definite upward swing in the latter part of 1935. It rose sharply to nearly one hundred at the end of the year. Thus we note that industrial production went down to one third at the height of the panic in March 1933. For nearly four years, 1931-35, production showed an average of sixty, or less than one half the 1928 peak.

Employment in the manufacturing industries was down, at its lowest, to less than two thirds of the years 1923-25. Pay rolls in the manufacturing industries came down from one hundred and nine in 1929 to 88.7 in 1930, to 67.5 in 1931, to 46.1 in 1932, rallying feebly to 48.5 in the following

year. The unemployed workers numbered 3,200,000 in the Federal census of April 1, 1930. They rose to 5,500,000 during the first eight months of 1931 in the American Federation of Labor estimates. They numbered eleven million in October 1932, and were close to fourteen million in the panicky days of March 1933, after the closing of the banks by President Roosevelt. A retrospect in 1935, as we have seen, actually estimated the unemployed in March 1933 at nearly seventeen million.

The produced national income went down from eighty-two billion dollars in 1929 to less than forty billions in 1932. The national income paid out went down from seventy-nine billions in 1929 to forty-nine billions in 1932. More than nine billions, in the latter year, were paid out of savings or borrowings. Translated into prewar dollars this means that the produced national income had fallen to four fifths of the national income of 1912. The distributed national income was well below the distributed income of 1912 when the population was only three fourths of the population of 1932. In the latter year the country had thirty million more people to feed than in 1912 and had only four dollars of income for every five dollars available in 1912. This sums up the violence and velocity of the storm.

3

The chronology of that bitter experience needs to be set down only in the briefest compass. The first warnings may be said to have come with the collapse of the great Florida land boom which reached its mad climax in 1925, began to sag in the Summer of 1926, and by 1927 was completely flattened out. But the Florida debacle was regarded in the country as a local event. By the beginning of 1928 the bull market, set in motion by the smashing Calvin Coolidge election back in 1924, was exciting lively apprehension in many quarters, but President Coolidge in January issued a statement that in his opinion the volume of brokers' loans, measuring the extent of Wall Street speculation, was not excessive. After the election of Herbert Hoover in November 1928, madness rose to heights hitherto unimagined even in that mad era. It is a paradox of the situation that apprehensions were less acute just before the smash in the Fall of 1929 than under President Coolidge two years earlier. The reason is humanly simple. Sober prophets were swept from their moorings by the very persistence of a delusion which they had said could not last. As predictions and warnings failed to come true and the market rocketed to ever dizzier heights it would be an economist or a public man of exceptional courage who refrained from asking himself if perhaps, after all, there might be something in this doctrine of the New

Era, this new Plateau of Prices, this new level of living triumphantly scaled by America and new horizons not to be measured by past experience.

Early in September 1929 the stock market experienced its first chill. The hurricane of liquidation broke loose on October 23 and raged until October 30, when a lull set in. Between the first tremors in September and November 13 the New York *Times's* price index for fifty leading stocks fell from three hundred and twelve to one hundred and sixty-four, or virtually down to one half. The subsequent history of the crisis is to be traced in the figures we have already quoted. For nearly a year after October 1929 men found it difficult to believe that the worst that could happen had not already happened. It was the period of reassuring announcements from high quarters about the market scraping bottom and business turning the corner. In March 1930 a distinguished Wall Street figure predicted that business would be normal in two months. President Hoover said that unemployment would be wiped out in sixty days. And in fact the first three months of 1930 did bring a revival which ended all the more disastrously in a succession of sinking spells such as we have traced. Even then hope persisted that the end of our troubles, if not actually in sight, was not far away.

Not until November 1931 was the National Credit Corporation set up to provide aid for threatened financial institutions. The new corporation was an organization of banks and not a Government agency. Its proposed capital was five hundred million dollars. Less than three months later the Reconstruction Finance Corporation was set up to deal with a situation whose magnitude was now beginning to be fully understood. By the month of June the RFC had loaned to forty-two hundred institutions more than a billion dollars. It was in this June 1932 that we touched the low point of the depression, as we came to know from the securer vantage point of several years later. To men living at the time there was no break in the clouds. Brief spurts of business activity had been experienced before 1932, but only to terminate in accelerated decline. The permanent mood of the country was reflected in the political situation. In July 1932 the country took it for granted that a Democratic nomination for President was equivalent to election. The event in November surpassed all forecasts. Mr Hoover carried six states with fifty-nine electoral votes. Mr Roosevelt carried forty-two states with four hundred and seventy-two electoral votes. Outside of New England the Republicans carried only Delaware and Pennsylvania. The country west of Pittsburgh to the Pacific presented an unbroken Democratic vista. It was

the American people registering the fact that wholesale prices were thirty-five per cent below the year 1926 and farm prices were down fifty-five per cent. Farm prices were thirty-five per cent below the 1914 level.

The plan of this chapter does not include a detailed study of the depression. It is enough to point out the successive phases in this critical period of the national life, from the initial Wall Street crash in the Fall of 1929 to the inauguration of President Roosevelt in March 1933. The first stage was one of seesawing hopes and panics. It ended with the great market collapse in the latter part of 1931. Expectations of recovery in the near future were abandoned, and the nation settled down to the long endurance test now plainly confronting it.

In this second phase, as we have already seen, came the opening Government assault on the depression with the setting up of the National Credit Corporation followed, early in 1932, by the much more elaborate Reconstruction Finance Corporation. As late as October 1931, two full years after the first stock-market collapse, the American Federation of Labor voted down a proposal to take up the study of unemployment insurance, though the Federation did serve notice that in another year it might be compelled to revise its position. A full year was not needed to effect that conversion. In the Summer of 1932 the Federation instructed its officers to proceed with the question of insurance. The same evolution of public sentiment is reflected in the progress of Government relief. State appropriations for the purpose began only in 1931. Federal loans to the states began in 1932. Not until the middle of that year did the feeling of a lasting emergency begin to take possession of people's minds. It found expression in phenomena like the Technocracy craze which swept the country in the Fall of 1932. Technocracy reflected a growing apocalyptic mood among the younger intellectuals. We were no longer being tossed about in the trough of the ordinary business cycle. We were witnessing the death throes of an era and the birth pangs of a new economic order.

Compared with the panic mood among intellectuals, the state of mind of the American people as a whole at the depth of the depression was less troubled than the actual facts would have warranted. The explanation is to be sought in the Presidential campaign which coincided with the lowest indexes in business and employment. The campaign brought diversion. Even in such distressful days as the Summer and Fall of 1932 the greatest event in our political calendar exerts its sway on a passionately political nation. At the sound of the familiar trumpets and choruses—the preconvention campaigns, the candidates, the Favorite Sons, the Dark Horses, the rivalries, alignments and maneuvers—the

American people at their weariest lift up their heads and sniff the air and say, "Hal hal!" with the war horse of the Scriptures. Besides diversion, the Presidential campaign of 1932 brought hope in the promise of change. It is a hope that springs quadrennially in the American breast, and this Presidential year of 1932, laden with such exceptional distresses, would more than ever turn people's eyes to the future.

We have said that this second phase of the depression brought out into the open the visions and prophecies. Technocracy and the economic system which produces for Use instead of for Profit were two of these. They were gentler cousins of the Soviet experiment whose grandiose Five-Year Plans and supposed extraordinary achievements now found an excellent foil in our own tribulations. Solid businessmen were heard here and there to say that the words Bolshevism and Communism no longer frightened them; though very few such businessmen actually meant as much as this. They spoke only because they were unhappy and lost and afraid.

But if the Russian answer did flit across the thoughts of a good many individuals it cannot be said to have impressed itself on the mass consciousness. The one change to which the vast majority of Americans turned their minds in the unhappy year 1932 was the traditional American change of voting out the ins and bringing in the outs. It is a process that answers to two basic human traits: the will to hope and the desire to punish. It is not a paradox to say that the American people found a measure of relief from its many troubles in the Spring and Summer of 1932 in pondering the rod it had in pickle for the Republican party. That task was executed in November, as we have seen, with a thoroughness for which there was no precedent in our political annals since General Grant overwhelmed Horace Greeley in the 1872 election. President Hoover carried the same number of states as Greeley, namely six, but out of a total of forty-eight states instead of thirty-seven as in Greeley's time. Mr Hoover's fifty-nine electoral votes were less by twenty-eight than the electoral vote of Alfred E. Smith four years earlier, when the fountains of the deep were broken and four states of the Solid South cast their votes for the Republican candidate. Mr Roosevelt's plurality over Mr Hoover was nearly a million votes larger than Mr Hoover's plurality over Governor Smith four years earlier.

Having settled accounts with Mr Hoover and the Republican party, the country might have been expected to settle down, as patiently as

might be expected under the difficult circumstances, to wait for the change of treatment which it had prescribed for itself beginning March 4, 1933. But in the three Winter months intervening between the election and the inauguration, the third and most acute phase of the business crisis descended on the country. It came like a thunderclap and its effects were momentous. Had the three months preceding March 4, 1933, been marked only by a gradual accentuation of the crisis—unemployment still growing, prices continuing downward, business sagging, the stock market limp—it would in all likelihood have been a different inaugural address that Mr Roosevelt delivered on March 4. A different spirit would have animated the New Deal. There developed after Mr Roosevelt's election, and came to a head in the last three weeks before his inauguration, the bank crisis and the threatened collapse of the nation's financial structure, and this became the heart of Mr Roosevelt's case against the Old Order. The banks and the insurance companies had long been feeling the effects of a collapse in security values and the prostration of agriculture. By the normal standards of solvency it was a question if any financial institution could pass muster, and this had been tacitly recognized when fiduciary institutions were permitted by state banking authorities to put an artificial valuation on their holdings. To bolster up the sick financial institutions of the country was the purpose of the National Credit Corporation and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation.

The difficult position of the banks was common knowledge when the Democratic platform of 1932, at the end of June, arraigned the Republicans in power at Washington, among other crimes, for encouraging the indefensible expansion and contraction of credit for private profit at the expense of the public "and for crippling our banking system and depriving millions of our people of their life savings." But the distress of our financial institutions, though common knowledge, cannot be said to have deeply impressed itself on the public mind, let alone to have assumed the dimensions of panic. That came only in February 1933, when Michigan ushered in a wave of "bank holidays" which swept the states. It culminated in a situation which compelled President Roosevelt to order, as his first official act on March 5, 1933, a general closing down of the banks under revived war powers granted him by Congress. For a few days a great nation seemed about to be deprived of its circulating money and forced on a scrip basis. Within a week began the reopening of national banks on a scale which brought immense reassurance to the country. On March 29, a fortnight after the end of the bank holiday, out of 6700 Federal Reserve banks there had reopened on license 5387 banks

with twenty-six billions in deposits. Something like thirteen hundred banks remained shut with less than three billions in deposits. The panic, the "fear of fear" which President Roosevelt denounced in his inaugural address, had been stopped.

What precipitated the panic? By the end of 1935, as the preliminary moves for the 1936 campaign got under way, the Republican argument settled down to the contention that Democratic victory in 1932 was responsible for the bank collapse. This theory held that by the middle of 1932 the low point of the world depression had been reached and left behind, and that the United States would have maintained a steady upward course if the nation's confidence, always shaken by a Democratic administration, had not been shattered by a Democratic victory in such critical times. The banks which Mr Hoover's Reconstruction Finance Corporation had kept going would gradually have picked up strength; they went down under the menace of radical Democratic legislation, aggravated by the hostile attitude of President-elect Roosevelt when he refused to accept President Hoover's offer of interim co-operation for the good of the country.

To this argument from the Republican side the Democratic reply has been that lack of confidence very decidedly precipitated the financial crisis; but that this loss of confidence primarily seized upon the beneficiaries of the Old Order who knew that a day of reckoning was at hand. The "money-changers in the temple" who had brought the American people to such a parlous state were not afraid of the normal consequences of Democratic rule in the form of business depression. They were now afraid of actual retribution in a personal sense. The bank holidays in the different states which culminated in the national bank holiday might conceivably have been delayed for a time or perhaps even indefinitely postponed if a friendly Republican regime in Washington had continued for another four years to pour out the people's money without asking for a moral and legal accounting. But a Democratic administration made a reckoning certain. Panic overtook the "money-changers," and from them spread to the country at large. Such has been the Democratic version of the final collapse.

This will explain the menacing tone of Mr Roosevelt's inaugural address on March 4, 1933. His denunciation of the "money-changers" had a savage bite that we do not find in the Democratic platform of the preceding June where the strong words were, after all, the traditional campaign rhetoric. That platform had been received with approval by the conservative press. The *New York Times* said it was a statement of principles that delighted the friends of the Democratic party and sur-

prised its opponents. "There was not one wild nostrum or disturbing proposal in the whole list." The 1932 Democratic platform was good old American procedure. But in the inaugural address of March 4, 1933, there rang out a minatory note which gave a new meaning to the New Deal. In June 1932 the manipulation of credit "for private profit" meant nothing more than the old grievance of the American democracy against unjust ways of making an exorbitant profit. But after March 4, 1933, it was the Profit System and the Profit Motive that were stressed in New Deal oratory. The old-style profiteer was never a popular figure, but now the quarrel was with the new-style Marxian profit maker. The New Deal was dedicated by its more ardent votaries to a system of production for Use instead of for Profit. If this meant anything it meant the abolition of the capitalist system.

Actually the sweeping phrases had no such drastic intention, except with a very small fraction of Mr Roosevelt's followers. It certainly did not enter President Roosevelt's own mind that the New Deal might involve the liquidation of our economic system, but phrases of a revolutionary nature did come out of his mouth, to be corrected when serious misapprehension threatened serious consequences. Then it would appear that Mr Roosevelt's hostility was directed not against profits but against unreasonable profits; that he was not opposed to individualism but only to rugged individualism; that he subscribed to the competitive system but it must be fair competition. The word Planning might have an ominous meaning for a public familiar with Five-Year Plans in Soviet Russia. But who could object to planning when it simply meant intelligence and foresight brought to the task of Government? The word Regimentation was used by Mr Roosevelt's opponents in the sense of coercion from above, but in the sense of regulation it went back nearly half a century to the Interstate Commerce Commission of 1889—a check on cutthroat competition and laissez faire in the railroad industry which we owe to Grover Cleveland.

We may say, then, that the New Deal launched by Mr Roosevelt in March 1933 for the rescue of the American people from economic and social collapse was an essentially American movement streaked with alien phrases. The voice was occasionally the voice of European revolution, but the hand was the hand of traditional American reformism. Throughout Mr Roosevelt's first administration much was heard of the conflict and contradiction in his own mind between the claims of Recovery and Reform. Recovery stressed the revival of business and employment. Reform meant changes in the economic system to do away with economic depressions. Reform of the stock exchange, for

instance, might go so far as to abolish the stock exchange. Reform of the banking system would make credit a Government monopoly. As it turned out, stock exchange reform, embodied in the Security Exchanges Commission, meant only a stricter supervision over the exchanges for the elimination of vicious business practices. It meant a standard of ethics and a system of legal requirements that had long obtained in Great Britain. But the creation of SEC was preceded and accompanied by such a flood of slogans and prophecies in various quarters, and by such furious verbal salvos against the Old Order from the entire Roosevelt front, that timid people could scarcely be blamed if they saw in the drive against the money-changers a movement to eliminate all money transactions from the economic system.

5

President Roosevelt's assault on the depression moved forward in four columns; or, to use the phrase of the New Deal itself, the pillars upon which Mr Roosevelt set out to rear his structure of national recovery were four in number. Three of these were the manipulation of the national currency through devaluation and other means, the Agricultural Adjustment Act or AAA, and the National Industrial Recovery Act, NIRA, operating through the machinery of the National Recovery administration or NRA. These three were of Mr Roosevelt's own creation. The fourth army of assault or pillar of hope he inherited from his predecessor Mr Hoover. This was the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, of which we have already spoken. Of these four recovery activities the two most effective were the first and the last—the devaluation of the dollar and the RFC; but it was the other two agencies, AAA and NRA, that bulked largest in the public eye. The drastic surgical operation on the dollar involved a short, sharp shock as Ko Ko might have said. Without any further need of manipulation or administration, the new fifty-nine-cent dollar retreated into the background. As for the RFC, it was a familiar institution by the Spring of 1933. It pursued the even tenor of its way and so failed to attain the prominence of the two newcomers, NRA and AAA. We may say that RFC, of all the so-called alphabet agencies, made the largest contribution to the maintenance of national morale in the darkest days of the depression, and by routine instead of drama gave the most effective single impetus to recovery.

Money manipulation as practiced by the New Deal was not a New Deal invention. This effective method of easing a debtor's burden

is as old as civilized government, and the history of the nations since the 1918 Armistice was exceptionally rich in examples. A year and a half before Mr Roosevelt's inauguration Great Britain, the traditional home and citadel of financial orthodoxy, had devalued the pound sterling by one third. The purpose was to lighten the intolerable burden of interest payments on the huge public debt and, by prevalent economic doctrine, to enable Great Britain to compete in the world market with nations possessing the advantage of a depreciated currency. In any event there was no revolutionary touch, in the sense of Red revolution, about the fiscal measures launched by Mr Roosevelt in May and June 1933 under the emergency powers conferred on him by Congress a few days after his inauguration—a reduction in the gold content of the dollar, nullification of the promise to pay in gold when so stated in Government obligations, with minor adventures in Government silver purchase and the like. Far from being inspired by Moscow, we find recurring in this crisis of 1933 the issues and phrases of forty years earlier in American history, when William J. Bryan fought against the crucifixion of mankind on a cross of gold. Even “sixteen-to-one” rose from its grave.

The heavy burden of debt under which the American people was bowed down was thus lightened by a policy of devaluation which lifted the price level. At the same time the RFC continued its generous loans to banks and other institutions; and so we witness the time-honored and effective technique of debtor relief by slicing the currency and making emergency loans.

The two main pillars of the New Deal as by itself described were the AAA and the NRA. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration was set up by the law of May 12, 1933, for the purpose of restoring “parity” between agricultural and industrial prices. It set out to attain this aim by reducing agricultural production and cutting down the big farm surpluses which for years hung over the world market with very serious effect on the farmer's income. The life span of the AAA was some three years less four months: it was annulled by the Supreme Court in January 1936. Unlike NRA, as we shall see later, AAA was not overthrown by a unanimous vote of the court. The opinion of the three dissenting justices was so vigorously expressed that again it is impossible to see in the AAA a revolutionary departure from American tradition and practice. AAA was in essence the familiar bounty system applied in the reverse to a national farm emergency. It was not a bounty to encourage production but to discourage production. Because the AAA was emergency legislation, nearly three years were permitted to elapse before the Supreme Court took cognizance. By that time the emergency in agricul-

ture was deemed to have been surmounted. Constitutional principle might once more receive consideration without fear of serious practical consequences.

It is NRA that presents us with the most striking example in the whole New Deal program of an emergency effort quite in consonance with American tradition but moving forward to an orchestral accompaniment of revolutionary slogans. In essence, NIRA, or the National Industrial Recovery Act, was an emergency re-employment measure. Its purpose was to get as many people back to work as possible in the shortest time. The method adopted was the obvious one of shortening the working day and the working week in order to create jobs. To that end was set up the forty-hour week with the prohibition of overtime and a ban on the labor of children under the age of sixteen. To that end, too, was directed the establishment of a minimum wage in industry, varying with the different sections of the country. Industrial recovery and increase in employment were closely associated in New Deal theory with an increase in purchasing power. Obviously it does not increase the nation's purchasing power if several million jobs are created by sharing work. But as a relief measure work-sharing has more to be said for it.

Something more than unemployment relief and ultimate business recovery was read into NRA by a considerable body of President Roosevelt's followers. The voluntary codes adopted by the different industries on the basis of general principles laid down in the preliminary President's Agreement of June 13, 1933, are described in the National Industrial Recovery Act and were described in the talk of the time as Codes of Fair Competition. This carried the plain implication that the unemployment crisis and back of it the whole depression were primarily due to unfair trade practices. The codes of fair competition were intended to lift the nation out of a state of collapse into which it had been precipitated by our pre-1929 cutthroat competition, by rugged individualism, by unchecked *laissez faire*. The immediate purpose in prohibiting the employment of children under sixteen in industry was to make more jobs for older persons, but in the debates of the time the ban on child labor was the answer to the exploitation of child workers under the Old Order. All in all NRA was an example of American voluntary co-operation carried out under familiar auspices: a mass enthusiasm fostered by slogans and symbols—the Blue Eagle of fair competition—and parades and, at bottom, a fraternal sharing of jobs. Yet this typical American effort presented itself, for a while and to some minds, as a new era and a new revelation.

For a while only. We must compare the fate of NRA with that of

AAA. The agency for farm relief functioned, as we have just seen, nearly three years, and up to the last it enjoyed a vigorous life and a good reputation. Critics who frowned on the principle of farm regimentation and subsidy did not go so far as to deny that AAA was effective, though possibly in the long run effective for harm. And as we have seen, when AAA was finally outlawed by the Supreme Court in January 1936, it was by a six-to-three vote and before a divided public opinion. Far different was the fate of NRA. It was annulled by the Supreme Court in May 1935, less than two years after its basic principles had been solemnly proclaimed in the President's Agreement and after an even shorter interval since the adoption of some of the principal industrial codes. The law setting up NRA was declared void by a unanimous vote in the Supreme Court when NRA in actual practice was moribund. Its possibilities for usefulness had speedily been exhausted. Such increase in employment as may be credited to NRA was registered in the first few months of its existence. Thereafter re-employment came to a standstill. At the same time NRA's innovations grew more and more irksome. Its opponents charged that NRA in its sharp reaction from cutthroat individualism abandoned our traditional policy in the field of antitrust legislation. The burden of higher costs which NRA imposed was most heavily felt by the small businessman. The ban on price cutting was regarded by many as a brake on the very development of purchasing power which it was the NRA's purpose to promote. In other words, the traditional American emergency features of NRA had rendered all the good that might be expected. Its doctrinaire clauses remained—only to hinder recovery. That disturbing orchestration of which we have spoken, the loud accompaniment of apocalyptic phrases to which NRA was inaugurated, may have contributed to its demise by confronting timid businessmen with the prospect of Revolution.

More than anything else NRA was discredited by its ultimate failure on the principal recovery front. It did not solve the unemployment problem. Between March 1933 and the end of the year something like 2,500,000 jobs had been created. For the earlier date the American Federation of Labor estimated nearly fourteen million persons out of work; in the middle of November the number was estimated by the Department of Labor at eleven million. But this was only a return to the level of September 1932. Anti-Roosevelt critics might say, as the Republican strategists in the 1936 Presidential campaign did strenuously argue, that only the Democratic victory of 1932 checked the processes of natural recovery which appeared in the middle of 1932. The election of Mr

Roosevelt had sent unemployment up another three million by the time he was inaugurated.

That is why the NRA went out of existence with comparatively few people outside the camp of radical theorists to mourn its passing. With the demise of NRA there came a great subsidence in revolutionary phrase-making in the country. Little spurts of apocalyptic oratory continued to light up the landscape from time to time; but the general burden of comment from the extreme radical side was that Mr Roosevelt had betrayed the New Deal.

6

When we sum up the real objectives and achievements of the New Deal we arrive at the conclusion that nothing in it, aside from the outcries of its more excited votaries plus occasional unguarded phrases by the responsible leaders, justifies either the revolutionary boasts of its zealots or the dark forebodings of its opponents. Yet the New Deal did bring changes in the life of the American people which on their own merits might be described as landmarks in our history; landmarks, but scarcely turning points.

One of these changes was the new position of trade unionism as reflected in the close alliance between Mr Roosevelt and organized labor. In his first campaign he had the ardent support of labor already organized in the American Federation of Labor. In the 1936 election and later his chief support came from labor striving to organize, as represented by the Committee for Industrial Organization under the leadership of John L. Lewis. A later coolness between Mr Roosevelt and the American Federation of Labor and the internecine quarrels between A.F. of L. and C.I.O. cannot obscure the fact that a change has taken place in the American attitude toward labor unions. Before 1932 the popular sentiment was cool to organized labor. At the beginning of the New Deal the American Federation of Labor had less than four million members, chiefly craft unions, in a gainfully employed American population of fifty million; whereas the British trade unions had five million members in a gainfully employed population of perhaps twenty million. With the advent of the C.I.O. mass-production unions, having a membership in 1938 of perhaps three millions, we begin to approach the British ratio.

Collective bargaining assumed a prominent role on the national scene. Collective bargaining was set up in the famous Article 7A of the National Recovery Act, which laid down the basic principle and created a National

Labor Relations Board to administer it. Within two months after the Supreme Court had invalidated NRA, the principle and the machinery of collective bargaining were re-enacted in the Wagner Labor Act of July 1935. Collective bargaining was based on the openly avowed theory that an era had ended in America. The high ceiling of American life, which compensated for the lack of social-security laws existing in other countries, had sunk lower. The American worker must now learn to think of himself as permanently a worker. The gates of opportunity were clanged shut. The worker's future must now be envisaged in terms of unemployment insurance and old-age pensions. It is true that the new realistic outlook was not consistently or universally held. The NRA codes did not declare for the independent union as against the "company" union, and for some time the issue remained acute. This would suggest that the administration itself was not so certain of the new era. As time went on and popular polls showed an overwhelming vote in favor of the social-security laws it became harder to deny that the American ceiling had indeed sunk lower in the consciousness of a people under the strain of hard times. We were in a new psychological era.

Actually that new era constituted no revolutionary departure. No better proof of this is needed than the fact that most of the reforms put through or advocated by the New Deal were already in being in England. It sums up the contradiction between the militant New Deal vernacular and the fair moderation of its acts that whenever accused of revolutionary aims the New Deal apologists would point to England. Surely Britain could not be accused of having gone over to Red revolution under the leadership of the Tory party! England devalued her money, adopted unemployment insurance after the war, operated old-age pensions since the first decade of the century, fostered trade unionism and imposed tariffs for the revival of agriculture. British practice took as a matter of course the regulation of stock exchange and money market embodied in our own New Deal reforms. The British Government employed a huge stabilization fund and other measures to maintain the price level at home, which would correspond to our own efforts at maintaining parity between farm and industrial prices. All these things in England had been done without any pretense that holy wars were under way against the profit system or rugged individualism or *laissez faire*. Perhaps the English have too much humor or too much straight thinking to belabor in the year 1933 a *laissez faire* that had really ceased to exist fifty years before.

On the other hand, the phlegmatic English were not stirred to their depths by our own justified indignation against the money-changers. For if Mr Roosevelt's phrase smacked somewhat of the soapbox it had a very

substantial basis in the fact that financial leadership in the United States had indeed proved itself lamentably weak in the history of the great boom that led to the 1929 collapse. It was on our part a failure primarily of men and not of machinery. In the years of reappraisal that followed the crash an attempt was made to hold our loose banking system responsible for our breakdown. A comparison was drawn with Canada's centralized bank system under which not a single bank failure was recorded. But it may be said bluntly that if Canada had had our bank system she would never have reached the depths of fiscal demoralization which we sounded; and if we had had Canada's centralized system we should have brought it down to the ground.

The shocking mental limitations of so many of our financial leaders stand out more glaringly than their moral delinquencies. It was bad enough that so many of them should have lent themselves to the dubious practices later revealed. The greater harm was done when they let themselves be carried away by the orgy of speculation that swept the country. The financial "giant" was as credulous as the ignorant Negro laundress whose savings were swallowed up in the bull market that ushered in the crash. That is the indictment against the Old Order which the New Deal could have most forcibly presented. New Dealers should not have tried to picture the life of the American people before 1933 as one of dire reaction, of antisocial ideals triumphant, of lack of humane progress, of millions of child slaves in the factories. On the contrary, the New Deal should have stressed the fine record of progress achieved before 1929. It should have emphasized the rising standard of living, the schools and colleges supplanting the factories, the growth of clean cities and better housing; and then it should have asked the recreant business leaders of America to say what had they done with this fair land and the fair promises of things to come.

7

It was not to be. A stranger to the United States and its past, let us say the classic visitor from Mars, having steeped himself in the New Deal speeches and literature of half a dozen years, could build up only one picture of life in the United States before the great collapse. He would say that the American people before 1929 lived under an economic system of which the mainspring was cutthroat competition. The various phases of that reign of tooth and claw our stranger from Mars would reconstruct from the specific New Deal reforms with their attendant comment in word and print. From discussions attending the NRA ban on the

labor of children in industry he would derive the firm conviction that in the old era child labor flourished on an enormous scale in the United States and that it was actually on the increase when the crash of 1929 intervened. In connection with maximum working hours decreed in the NRA codes the inquiring Martian would be led to believe that the working week under the old system, if not actually tending to become longer, had shown no tendency to shrink within any measurable past. He might think that up to the crash of 1929 we clung to the ideal of the old preindustrial working day which lasted from sunrise to sunset. From the NRA provisions against price cutting and the attendant discussion our Martian student would gather that the debacle of 1929 was brought about by a prolonged orgy of price slashing. The evils afore mentioned—the exploited labor of children, long working hours, falling wages—would be the logical consequence of a murderous competition.

Abolition of child labor in the NRA codes and shorter hours for all adult workers brought to the fore the problem of the New Leisure and particularly the need for larger school facilities. These problems were discussed in a manner to impress the Martian with the belief that the American people's educational and recreational machinery had been sorely neglected in the era before the New Deal. In the matter of public works as a cure for unemployment and as a social good in itself the Martian student no doubt would read with hearty approval about large-scale programs of slum clearance and the creation of a new civilized standard of housing for many million Americans. These things would be discussed in a manner to suggest that in the recent past of the American people there had been no extirpation of slums and no rise in housing standards.

Many other harsh impressions of the recent past our Martian would bring away from his studies and readings in the New Deal literature. The whole inquiry would resolve itself in the single somber picture of an American system motivated entirely by greed, refusing to recognize the claims of common humanity and morals, operating without plan and in ignorance of an advancing technology, neglectful of the lessons of the World War and of the spirit of the times. It was an economic system operated by Bourbons who never forgot a selfish interest and never acquired an enlightened outlook upon a changing world. And because the Bourbons continued to sit on the steam valve of American economics and American human rights the explosion came.

It is hardly necessary to say that in this arraignment there were gross exaggerations, distortions and omissions. Quite a different picture of American civilization under the Old Order would be spread out before

the Martian inquirer's eyes if he let himself be sufficiently carried away by indignation or moved by curiosity to go behind the indictment and try to see for himself; if, that is, our Martian set himself to read the story of American civilization between the years 1910 and 1930 as revealed in the newspapers, magazines, books and other contemporary records of the period. We have not the least intention here to accompany the Martian on a prolonged exploration of that American past. We shall merely point out that our planetary visitor would be bound to arrive at the same conclusions and to end up in the same perplexed state of mind that beset a great part of the American people in the face of the New Deal's indictment of the Old Deal. That state of mind may be described as one of utter inability to recognize in the pictures drawn by the New Deal artists the American past as people knew it in their own experience.

To be sure, the mood of the American nation in the first period of the depression was not conducive to a just and balanced reading of the nation's recent past. Amid the crash of personal and national fortunes people were aware of little beyond the bitter immediate moment. Consequently our New Deal picture of the Egyptian bondage in which America lived before 1930 found general acceptance, though individual dissenters made themselves heard. Such minority voices grew in number as the crisis began to lift and the feeling of doomsday retreated. But years must still elapse before the nation may be expected to turn a truly critical eye on the New Deal portrait of the Old Deal.

We shall not dispatch the Martian visitor on a detailed and exhaustive testing of the New Deal indictment. It is enough to touch on the main counts in the presentation. In the matter of child labor our inquiring Martian would find that the twenty years preceding the advent of the New Deal were not an era of ruthless exploitation. On the contrary, this period witnessed a very great reduction in the number of child workers. We have discussed the subject in some detail in an earlier chapter and need only reproduce here the salient fact that in the year 1910 the children under sixteen in gainful occupation numbered very nearly two million, and in the year 1930 they were down to less than seven hundred thousand, and of these something like four hundred and fifty thousand child workers were on the farm. The number of children in the factories and mills in the year 1930 would be about seventy-five thousand, whereas it was the impression definitely conveyed in New Deal criticism that before 1933 "millions" of children were tied to the wheels of industry. The case may be summed up by saying that if in the year 1930 the ratio of child workers had been as high as it was in the year 1910 they would have numbered in 1930 more than 2,600,000. Actually in that year the child

workers under sixteen were 667,000 in number, so that we may say that in twenty years of the Old Deal nearly two million children under sixteen were released from work. It is a decline of seventy-five per cent. Thus our Martian would find little ground for the assertion or belief that American industry before 1930 was based on child labor, and that this was a condition representing no betterment in the past.

In weekly hours of labor for adults the Martian would find that the five-day, forty-hour week established by the NRA codes did represent an advance over the forty-eight-hour week which was the norm in 1930, but that in all fairness this reduction from forty-eight hours to forty hours should be compared with the progress from a normal sixty-hour week at the beginning of the century to the forty-eight-hour week of 1930. If we go back half a century we find ourselves in the seventy-two-hour working week in the recollection of many men alive today. Plainly, then, the shorter working week of the New Deal program, like the elimination of child labor contemplated in the NRA codes, is not a revolution in American life but a continuation. If we so wish we might call it a fulfillment; but it was the fulfillment of a promise and a forward movement which had scored notable results under the Old Deal.

Wages are a complicated subject. But roughly our Martian would note that the real wages of the American worker increased by one third between the World War and 1930. He would take into account other gains and compensations, such as the larger leisure following upon shorter working hours; the extraordinary development in free social services, such as education and recreation; the reduced cost of other goods and services, such as cheap access by urban rapid transit to the parks and beaches. All in all we may say that the standard of living of the American people had very nearly doubled in the course of a generation. It is from this higher plateau of general well-being that the number of children in the high schools of the nation grew nearly ten times as fast as the population, and the number of college students grew five times as fast as the population. Obviously this is not a picture in harmony with the ordinary New Deal formula of cutthroat competition and rugged individualism debasing the level of American existence and playing ducks and drakes with the happiness of the American people.

Two outstanding counts in the New Deal indictment might detain our curious Martian for more than a moment. He has read a great deal about murderous price cutting as a peculiarly wicked phase of the Old Order. He has now seen that this alleged savage competition in prices has not expressed itself in lower wages, longer working hours, or the exploitation of children. Real wages have gone up in the space of a generation. Work-

ing hours have been reduced. The number of child workers has been cut down by three fourths in the space of twenty years. The student from Mars will therefore be more eager than ever to find instances where reckless price cutting did leave its mark on the national life. But as he continues his search for such ravages of competition without success he finds himself impelled to the conclusion that he is in quest of a phantom; though no doubt in isolated cases the evil practice may have manifested itself in our economic life, and in sufficient degree to engage the attention of the public authorities as a specific problem to be dealt with.

That price cutting as a major characteristic of the American business system could not have been an evil in the years preceding the collapse of 1929 will be obvious if only we recall one of the very biggest problems of the depression—a problem generally admitted to have been among the chief causes of the collapse. This was the plight of the American farmer resulting from a maladjusted price level. Beginning with the Armistice the price of farm products had shrunk alarmingly while the price of industrial products remained high. To remedy this grievance and this wrong the Roosevelt policies of dollar devaluation and AAA control of production were directed. The objective set forth by Congress in many of its major bills was the establishment of “parity” between farm prices and industrial prices. That goal, incidentally, was never attained. At their nearest approach to parity, before the business recession of 1937, farm prices were to industrial prices in the ratio of something like sixty-five to one hundred by the indexes for the basic year 1913. In any event if there is one field of production where a catastrophic fall in prices is to be noted, suggesting cutthroat competition at work, it is apparently in agriculture, where Mr Roosevelt’s efforts were directed toward lifting prices. In industry there could have been no such price anarchy, since Mr Roosevelt’s other efforts were directed to keeping down industrial prices. The fact is that isolated instances like price slashing on patented articles, or the “loss-leader” system in the department stores by which a merchant amputated prices on a special article for advertising purposes, were magnified by New Deal critics to describe a system which on other occasions they only too readily accused of practicing monopoly and price fixing.

Housing, and especially slum clearance, is the last example we shall cite of our Martian’s perplexities. There could humanly be nothing but sympathy for the housing projects launched with the aid of Federal money in many parts of the country. Yet one may point out that no other feature of the New Deal reconstruction program, not even the “abolition” of child labor, managed to wrap itself in so impressive an ethical atmos-

phere as this new campaign for the extirpation of slums. If the movement started under Mr Roosevelt should provide in the course of five years a million new homes for the American people it would be an admirable achievement—but also a continuation of the work that was proceeding under the Old Deal since the war. It was against the facts to suggest that not until the New Deal came along to substitute the service motive for the profit motive had it been possible to attack the slum problem on a broad national front.

The slums were under fire on a broad national front for a decade after 1920, though to be sure the paramount urge was profits and the slum clearance program was not consciously formulated. It is enough to point out what happened in the city of New York. In less than a dozen years Manhattan borough, the old New York City, lost half a million inhabitants to the newer boroughs. The historic East Side of the poor and, to a lesser extent, the West Side tenement districts were half emptied out. A housing map of Manhattan about the year 1935 shows three fourths of its tenement area marked black, indicating a loss of twenty-five per cent of the population or more. The people from the cold-water tenements migrated by the hundreds of thousands across the East River bridges and Harlem River bridges to Queens and Brooklyn and the Bronx, where they built themselves many square miles of two-family frame houses with front yard and back yard and garage.

These flat acres of wooden houses, set shoulder to shoulder, have been criticized as without purposeful planning, as aesthetic horrors and as constituting a tremendous fire hazard. In nearly twenty years the fire hazard has failed to show even the faintest of threats. The other complaint—of aesthetic failure and lack of harmonized purpose—may be well founded; but it will need a great deal of aesthetic reasoning to prove that a two-story frame house with plenty of light and air, with modern plumbing and a back yard for the children to play in, is not a decided improvement on the old-style New York tenement. In a dozen years, under the Old Deal, the profit motive removed perhaps three quarters of a million people from the slums of New York and the older parts of Brooklyn. It is a point on which the thoughts of our Martian inquirer might well linger.

Liberty-Loan parades were employed to stir the enthusiasm of the American people for the mighty tasks entailed by the World War, and with a big parade in New York the NRA was launched in 1933. The

fervor of our war parades in 1917 followed upon long years of hesitation and the strife of sharply divided opinion. The NRA parades followed upon a Presidential campaign which inflicted upon the Republican party the worst defeat in our political history since the Civil War, a disaster which left scars and rancors behind it. It is, however, an accepted formula of American politics that even a nomination which has been won by the narrowest margin and after the bitterest display of feeling shall formally be made unanimous. Business leaders marched in those NRA parades who at heart must have been doubtful of the wisdom of the new experiment, if not actually hostile to its purposes.

Americans marched in the Liberty-Loan parades of 1917 who were at heart unreconciled to the need of taking up arms against Germany, and Americans marched in the NRA parades who were unreconciled to the New Deal. In both instances they did their loyal duty, merely reserving to themselves their unquestioned right to speak out loud when the emergency was over. The NRA parades, and the Blue Eagle which was the emblem of the NRA, and the President's Agreement which set up a maximum working week and minimum wage scales before the NRA codes could deal with these things in detail, exhibit the national genius for mass co-operation, the national emotionalism, and—what is part of the same thing—the national susceptibility to the catchword, the slogan, the fad and the fashion of the moment. Englishmen, to whom the World War came so much closer than it did to us, did not surrender as completely as we did in wartime to spy manias and conformity crusades. Englishmen in their attack on the depression of the 1930s did not fall victim to watchwords or catchwords as readily as we did, or recognize so fully the obligation to "come along," which is part of the American heritage.

But beneath the agitated surface we do not greatly change. On January 6, 1936, the Supreme Court annulled the AAA, outstanding agency and achievement of the New Deal since the demise of the NRA seven months earlier. In the same month Congress by overwhelming majorities in both houses passed a Bonus bill providing virtually for the immediate payment of World War veterans' compensation certificates not originally due until the year 1945. President Roosevelt's veto was overridden by a four-to-one vote in the Senate and a five-to-one vote in the House. The demise of the AAA and the triumph of the Bonus in the space of less than three weeks was coincidence, but coincidence of a very impressive kind. It symbolized, after a conflict and confusion of ideas and slogans lasting nearly three years, a victory for the old American way of dealing with economic and social crisis over the newer ideas let loose by the

depression. We may call it a victory for the old American remedy, which is Bounty, over the new social philosophy and remedy, which went by the name of Planning. It may be called a victory of Recovery over Reform. It may be called a victory of traditional American populism over twentieth-century postwar radicalism.

By the old American system of Bounty we mean chiefly pension or bonus and money tinkering in its various forms—paper money, silver coinage and, in its latest manifestation, devaluation. Let it be said that this second device for relieving economic distress by currency manipulation has ceased, since the World War, to be an exclusive American practice. Indeed Europe has shown the way in inflation and devaluation on a grand scale. But for us it is a tradition going back to the beginning of the nation and to colonial history. The fear of inflation that came to us as a sequel to the World War repeats the experience of the Civil War and the Revolutionary War. It has been said that every generation in the United States has to fight over again the battle for sound money. If we should turn out to have escaped the ordeal in this generation it will be because, as just stated, the World War ushered in very broad ideas and practices. When proud England goes off the gold standard, when schools of economists accept devaluation as a necessity and even as a national convenience, when foreign money rates are pegged and currencies are controlled by various devices, we are away from the prewar ideas on the sanctity of money over which battles were fought. It is true that a big battle against paper money may still have to be fought, but that is because paper money today does not spell merely "soft" money, but absolute disaster. Our postwar conscience and courage do not shrink from cutting the franc, the pound sterling or the dollar to half of its value. Our only fear is that of money losing all its value as it did in Germany after the war.

Bounty in the sense of war pensions has been, on a grand scale, part of the American system since the Civil War. The pension problem or pension scandal had attained a magnitude which people were calling intolerable when the Spanish-American War came along to add its perceptible bit. All this paled, however, before the possibilities opened up by the World War with something like four million veterans. A nation that was still paying pensions to a few widows of the Revolutionary War now faced the prospect of an army of four million pensioners continued into an indefinite future of survivors and descendants under the fostering care of the politicians. To remove the menace a quit-claim settlement in the form of a bonus for nondisabled veterans was adopted. For the care of its disabled World War veterans the nation was spending more

than half a billion dollars annually and seemed likely to go on doing so for a great many years. Bonus was the popular name for the Adjusted Compensation Certificates which to the amount of approximately two billion dollars were in the hands of the war veterans when the depression set in. Soon the demand arose for the immediate payment of the certificates. The fight for the bonus lasted several years and was marked by more than one Presidential veto; but as we have seen, the bonus won in the opening month of 1936. A nation which had always been generous to its war veterans found it impossible to refuse World War veterans "their" money in such bitter hard times.

Topping all other forms of bounty, of course, was the gigantic system of public relief for the unemployed. Such claimants on the public bounty were not altogether new in our history. For the relief of disaster by fire, flood and other acts of God large sums of public money had always been forthcoming. The unemployed were the casualties of peace; unemployment was a peacetime calamity on an unprecedented scale. As time passed and the vast relief armies showed no diminution, the emergency had patently become a permanent emergency. Relief in the form of a job on public works or on public projects directed by Government gave employment to roughly 3,500,000 persons towards the end of 1938. The right to a job, the right to work, was being affirmed in the platforms of the political parties. At the beginning of 1939 something like twenty million persons were in receipt of public support in some form.

9

What was the temper of the American people in the depression decade? An extraordinary change had taken place in the nation's fortunes. Must we therefore take note of a parallel change in the soul of the whole people and its traditional forms of behavior? We can perhaps best get at our answer by indirection, by showing what the temper of the majority of the American people in these years of trial was not. The popular temper of those ten years was not the frame of mind exhibited or described by the intellectualist and idealist minority. Neither in the physical nor in the psychological realm did popular behavior during the depression correspond closely with current theory or tocsin.

Out of any amount of available evidence on this point we may quote at random a statement made in the early months of 1936 by a well-known social worker at an interstate conference on Transients and Settlements. There was great concern at the time over the problem of families and individuals wandering through the country in search of work—particu-

larly younger men who, by analogy with a current problem in Soviet Russia, were often described as our Homeless Youth.

Only the Federal Government [said the speaker] is equal to the task. Men will not starve—they will not let their children starve—in a land like this. If society will not provide an orderly method for the solution of this problem, these men will take it into their own hands.

This is a characteristic minority utterance of the time, both in its assumptions of fact and in the proposed remedy, Federal action. When the speaker declares that men will not starve or let their children starve he plainly implies, in this context of the transient unemployed, that people have been allowed to starve. For that matter, discussions of the whole vast problem of unemployment and public relief were marked by a ready use of the word "starvation" that was unjustified by the facts. People were not allowed to starve at any time in the depression, and certainly not toward the end of the first Roosevelt administration in 1936. Huge sums were being expended on relief, directly and indirectly, in cash and in kind. The health of the people continued to improve with every year of the depression. Dire prophecies to the contrary made at the beginning of hard times had to be revised to the extent of warning us against undue optimism before the long-time effects of undernourishment had been felt. Quieter speakers preferred to discuss undernourishment instead of starvation, but it was not unknown for a social worker or public official to begin moderately with the problem of underfeeding and sooner or later slip into the problem of starvation. That bitter word was still being occasionally used at a time when our family-relief payment was not very far below the normal weekly wage among British workers.

The second thesis in our quoted statement is that only the Federal Government is equal to the task of handling the transient problem. This thesis reflects a prevalent mood of the years since the World War—a mood in which only the Federal Government is equal to every problem which one has close at heart: Prohibition, labor, protection of women and children, education. Now it may be that a quarter of a million men tramping the roads in quest of work can be better handled by the Federal Government than by the local authorities, but the thing is not self-evident. With much more force we might say that only the Federal Government is equal to the task of meeting the problem of public education in the United States; as indeed a good many people have said. Yet a nation which has managed to do quite well for popular schooling through state and local activity is now asked to believe that only the central Govern-

ment can deal with the temporary problem of the transient unemployed. Our speaker has plainly started out with a strong predilection for Federal activity.

The most striking and characteristic part of our quoted statement, however, is the dictum that society must find a way to solve the problem of the young worker, or else the fathers of the alleged starving children "will take it into their own hands." In other words, Revolution. Now in March 1936 when this pronouncement was made the word "revolution" was far less common than it had been two years earlier. But in a milder paraphrase we find people as late as 1936 sounding the warning that men will take things into their own hands. At every point in the spectrum of public opinion from Right to Left, in defense of every pet interest or theory, men will take things into their own hands. If the Federal Government does not solve the problem of migratory youth by providing keep and transportation men will take matters into their own hands. On the other hand, if the Federal Government persists on its spendthrift course and lavishes money on such absurd projects as camps for transients, thus adding to the tax burdens of the American people, then the taxpayers will take the economy problem into their own hands. If the Supreme Court continues to annul social legislation and persists in the scandal of hair-breadth five-to-four decisions then the people will take things into their own hands. On the other hand, if the administration clings to its policy of fomenting class hatred and other un-American doctrines then will those Americans who have the preservation of our ancient heritage close to heart take things into their own hands. Apparently upon the slightest provocation the American people stands prepared to raise the red flag of revolution or the white flag of Fascism—transient youth, erosion, taxation, child labor, flood control, adult education, milk control, freight rates, prenatal care for mothers—all these problems the Federal Government must solve or the barricades will go up.

And yet, as we have good reason to rejoice, the most impressive feature in ten years of hard times and great spiritual travail was the fact that the American people never once thought of taking things into its own hands. The volume of social unrest was so remarkably small in comparison with the theoretical opportunity that there can be only one conclusion. The nation's temper in depression was the traditional temper. The labor strikes never assumed a really formidable character even when, after 1936, they took on the new and startling form of the sit-down strike. Rural unrest broke out in farmers' strikes and anteforeclosure demonstrations that were not pleasant to contemplate; but they never assumed alarming dimensions. The one thing which Americans in a time of un-

precedented trial did take into their own hands was the ballot on Election Day. Having designated the men of their choice to work out a solution, the American voters stood ready to accept the solution offered them by the men of their choice. If results were not satisfactory they expected to take up their ballots again two years or four years later and make a new choice.

10

A report by the Department of Labor to the United States Senate in the Summer of 1937 dealt with the subject of Migrants. It was one more instance of the striking change in color and tone that we have seen come over many common words since the panic of 1929 and particularly since the first Roosevelt election. The general nature of the change may be described as a swing away from hope and buoyancy to despair. Once upon a time we knew of such things as migratory workers, seasonal workers, graduating down through various stages of casualness to the chronic wanderer of the roads. In the lowest phases it was a decidedly underprivileged class, and yet the general effect conveyed by the idea of migration was a cheerful and romantic one. It meant fluidity and mobility, our great American hallmarks. Philosophical observers from the other side of the Atlantic might call us a restless, uprooted people, and in occasional dark moods we might ourselves deplore our restlessness, our inability to stay put; but only on occasion. Most of the time we were proud of being restless and uprooted and nomads; for it only meant that the ceaseless movement of three centuries which had made America was still in people's blood. If we were migrants it meant we were freemen, and not, as the Europeans are, *adscripti glebae*, serfs tied to the soil by lack of opportunity or by long spiritual tradition. It meant that the Frontier was still in people's blood after it had vanished from the Government maps. Even to be a migrant in search of work meant with us something far different from what it meant in other lands. It meant a man who wandered out of choice rather than necessity; a man who was looking for work because he had given up his job to look for a better job or a different job, instead of being given up by the job. In medieval Europe a masterless man was an outcast, an outlaw almost, whose life was at the mercy of any stranger. It is impossible to fit such a meaning of masterless man into the American setting. Here the masterless man was a man who acknowledged no master, even if it amounted to trudging the roads with a bundle or riding the rods on a freight train.

But when people after 1933 said migrants it was in the new melancholy

cadence. To be sure, times and conditions had changed greatly. We could find little cheer in the thought of hundreds of thousands of men scattered over the country in search of work. The report of the Department of Labor said it was a "rather futile" search. Large-scale development of public relief had cut down migration. Business recovery after 1935 had operated in the same direction. Even then, said the report of July 1937, the floating population looking for work was probably larger than it was in the 1920s.

Do we want to get rid of our whole floating population in the labor market? Do we look forward to a condition of security in which the hazards of unemployment shall be eliminated? These seem idle questions to ask. Of the whole New Deal program no single feature had won such wide acceptance in Mr Roosevelt's second administration as Security. It was the vision of an America in which there should be no more people on the roads looking for work, but every man was safe in his job, from youth to manhood and old age—a placid, humble, but sufficient existence, with the cycle of adventure flattened out and, in place of change and movement and fluidity and hardship, Stability.

II

Yet there is good reason to believe that America, for all the popular acclaim of stability and security, is not yet tamed to the European level of stability, the Old World civilization where it is so hard to distinguish between stabilization and stratification, or even petrification. The nomad virus is still in the blood. The Department of Labor report found that the migrants are still in great measure within the old covered-wagon tradition, or the restless pioneer tradition, or the gold-rush tradition. The spectacle of a family of unemployed Americans wandering over the face of the country in a battered automobile, babies and all, has in it an air of hope and freedom that overcomes the economic gloom. It bespeaks a country in which there is still room to wander around, even if employment conditions may be as bad in sunny California as in the home left behind by the wanderers. It bespeaks a certain lingering belief in Opportunity, as represented by California's golden climate, or by a married daughter living in California, or by any of many imaginable hopes and adventures. There can be no question which is the happier state, that of the American "migrant" in his derelict automobile with the wife and the children, or that of the stabilized British coal miner "secure" in his dole of so many shillings a week through a dozen years of unemployment.

Even the costly fluctuations of the business cycle may come to be vin-

licated in the public mind, by this test of general well-being or ill-being, as against the proposed substitutes. An apologia for the business cycle with all its faults would fall under several heads. (1) We might compare the ravages of our man-made business cycle with the old nature-made agricultural cycle to see whether preindustrial, precapitalist economy did not know peaks and depressions as steep as our own. (2) We might compare the violence of business cycles in the United States and in England for the purpose of determining how far our own symptoms are American rather than capitalistic; in other words, how far we are blaming an economic system for the defects of a national temperament. (3) We might compare the business cycle at its worst with the normal operation of the new Planned Economy in the totalitarian countries of Europe.

The cycle of good and bad years, of feast and famine, is not peculiar to the modern capitalist system operating in the sphere of commerce and industry. Agriculture has always been under the sway of the cycle; and it is from the farmer's experience that we have the seven fat years and seven lean years. Rain and drought are earth's oldest industrial rhythm, along with the grasshopper and the boll weevil. The farmer insists on taking chances with the thin soil of what we now call the Dust Bowl because two good years spell solvency and three good years mean prosperity—which is exactly the way the businessman reasons. Agricultural "deflation" after the Armistice was a bitter grievance, and was indeed cited as a basic cause of the business collapse of 1929; the farmer's purchasing power had disappeared. Farmers suffered after the Napoleonic wars and after the Civil War. The failure of the Irish potato crop in 1846 was an episode in the history of the farm cycle which includes the famine in Canaan three thousand years ago and the Russian famine of 1921 with a toll of many million deaths.

The role played by national temperament in the operation of the business cycle is a frequently recurrent subject in the present volume and is, indeed, implicit in the general theme. No discussion of the business cycle is complete which fails to take note of the fact that industrial production at the depth of the depression was down to fifty-five per cent from the 1929 peak in the United States and down to ninety per cent in Great Britain; and that at the crest of unemployment the United States of abounding natural wealth had nearly twice as many people out of work as Great Britain in proportion to the population; and that the violence of our financial collapse in the Winter of 1932-33 was out of all comparison with the British experience.

Economic planning means full control by the state of a nation's economic life. The planned economies are the authoritarian states in

Russia, Germany and Italy. When we look closely at the planned economies we see how radically they depart from the planned economy that is a balanced economy. In these dictatorships the national life is not balanced but on the contrary enormously out of balance. The national life is molded and directed to a particular idea or aim, to which all other considerations are sacrificed. They are really not plans but campaigns.

In the Third Reich of Hitler, in the Italy of Mussolini and in the pioneer of them all, Soviet Russia, planning coincides with dictatorship, with a secret police, with concentration camps, with the whole apparatus of coercion. In other words it is a denial of the idea conveyed by the word planning in its ordinary usage among the free peoples. With them a plan is something arrived at by free agents sitting around a table, their objective the general welfare, their method free conference and debate. A nation-wide plan calls up the picture of a conclave of unselfish, modest experts sitting in committee on the state of the nation, thinking in terms of a harmonious development of the national life. Harmony, balance, self-restraint, common sense, are the essence of a plan. That at least is the theory of a Planned Economy by contrast with the selfish, aimless and confused processes of the competitive system.

The facts of planned economy are at the other end from the theory. Mussolini's plan for Italy was not a plan for raising the people of Italy to a higher level of well-being, but a campaign to revive the Roman Empire. Hitler's plan was to rearm Germany, seize new territories and dominate Central Europe. It is a policy but not a plan for the general welfare of the German people. That policy, too, demanded sacrifices and the German people were asked to give up butter for guns. It was some time before the world understood the Soviet five-year plans, but finally the world did learn that it was Joseph Stalin's plan against Leon Trotsky's plan. It was not a difference of opinion between two engineers, but a struggle for power between two political leaders. It was not Planned Economy functioning in an atmosphere of unhurried and selfless thought. It was a fight between rival plans and ambitions; when Stalin got the upper hand the rival planner, Trotsky, had to leave the country.

No doubt the dictators all have the general welfare of their people at heart. They are planning a future of unprecedented prosperity, if a somewhat indefinite future. But even if we concede that someday the people of Germany, Italy and Russia will reap the fruits of their present heavy sacrifices this is not a planned economy in the sense that people have contrasted planning with free competition. It is, indeed, at the opposite pole to what people usually mean by planning. A man with an

income of five thousand a year may formulate and carry out a plan to spend one thousand a year on the maintenance of himself, his wife and his two children, and put away four thousand a year in the bank. It is a plan, but it is hardly what people consider a planned existence.

Another word that will repay candid examination is security. Of the different forms of protection set up in the Social Security Act of 1935, the two that bulk largest in people's thoughts are old-age pensions and unemployment insurance. An old-age pension is at all times security. Unemployment insurance is security in what used to be called normal years only. That such normal years will ever come back is questioned by many, and precisely by those who stress the need of insurance. It is a paradox that the country was converted to the idea of unemployment insurance by an economic landslide, but unemployment insurance will not greatly avail us in another collapse. In such an emergency insurance is bound to become public relief, just as in Great Britain after 1930 unemployment insurance became the dole. Unemployment insurance will cope with three or four million persons out of work in a labor market of fifty million men and women. Insurance will break down under the weight of ten million unemployed. Under the New York law unemployment benefits range from five dollars a week to a maximum of fifteen dollars a week for not more than sixteen weeks in any one year. That is to say the maximum insurance benefit in New York is two hundred and forty dollars a year or twenty dollars a month if spread through the year. Under the Federal Old-Age annuity plan a workingman who has earned a total of fifty thousand dollars in wages before reaching the age of sixty-five, let us say a workingman who has earned forty dollars a week over a period of twenty-five years, will be entitled to a monthly pension of a trifle over fifty dollars. With this unemployment insurance benefit of twenty dollars a month in New York or this fifty dollars a month security pension we may compare the ordinary depression relief payments. They range in New York from a basic sixty dollars a month to approximately one hundred dollars in the case of many skilled workers or white-collar employees. In other words the unemployment insurance maximum of two hundred and forty dollars a year in New York is about one sixth of the average industrial wage in 1929. The Federal pension is about one third of the average wage in 1929. The depression relief payment is between one half and two thirds of the normal industrial wage.

We thus have some ground for arguing that, coolly appraised, the security which our present economic system offers in actual income, even in a devastating business depression, is higher than the security

envisaged by a system of insurance and pensions which seeks to protect the worker against the ills of the business cycle. The instinct which formerly led American labor to look askance at unemployment insurance and other forms of social protection, and to make high wages the one big objective, may still be called sound at bottom. Organized labor up to 1931 was not greatly interested in unemployment insurance, health insurance, housing and other public activities. Labor said brusquely, "You pay me a decent wage and I will feed myself better, clothe myself better, house myself better and have more education and fun than Government can supply me."

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Thus it was not a wholly faithful picture of the crisis confronting him at the beginning of his first administration that President Roosevelt held up in his address to Congress on January 6, 1937, a fortnight before the beginning of his second term. Mr Roosevelt was by no means immune to the lure of those apocalyptic phrases in which the depression was so rich, though we cannot humanly blame a President for refusing to minimize the dangers and the distress from which he has been instrumental in lifting his country. Looking back, then, to March 4, 1933, from the happier vantage point of January 6, 1937, President Roosevelt said of that dark period:

It was not only that the visible mechanism of economic life had broken down. More disturbing was the fact that long neglect of the needs of the underprivileged had brought too many of our people to the verge of doubt as to the successful adaptation of our historic traditions to the complex modern world.

Here once more is exemplified the divided mind of the New Deal as between Recovery and Reform; that is to say, a confusion between the temporary breakdown of the mechanics of an economic system, such as its banks and factories, and the collapse of the underlying idea and animating spirit of a system. It was a confusion between the rugged individualism which expressed itself in wildcat speculation and the rugged individualism of the normal capitalist way of life. Mr Roosevelt could not resist the temptation of occasionally citing child labor, the sweatshops and starvation wages as the basic cause of the depression when even in his own mind there were nearer and bigger causes. After stressing our long neglect of the underprivileged as in the forefront of the forces behind the depression, he proceeds to answer his own indict-

ment by enumerating the steps taken to prevent a recurrence of national breakdown. He says to Congress in this address of January 6, 1937:

With that aim in view [to prevent a future crisis] you and I joined in a series of enactments—safe banking and sound currency, the guarantee of bank deposits, protection for the investor in securities, the removal of the threat of agricultural surpluses, insistence on collective bargaining, the outlawing of sweatshops, child labor and unfair trade practices and the beginning of security for the aged and the worker.

Mr Roosevelt begins by emphasizing cures and safeguards that do not concern the underprivileged. The twenty-dollar-a-week wage earner was not victimized by failing banks, did not buy utility bonds or straw mortgages, did not play the stock market. When we say the underprivileged we do not even mean the farmers caught in the crash of agricultural prices, to save whom the AAA was devised, and whose conversion from their traditional Republican allegiance produced the thundering Roosevelt victory of 1932 and prepared the way for the still bigger triumphs of 1934 and 1936.

Mr Roosevelt, then, provides the answer to his own implied charge that the chaos of 1932 arose from an inherently vicious system. But much more far reaching in its implications was the hearty support that Mr Roosevelt in this message of January 6, 1937, gave to the United States Constitution. That instrument he found in no need of alteration if wisely and conscientiously interpreted in the light of new needs. "During the last year there has been a growing belief that there is little fault to be found with the Constitution of the United States as it stands today." No sharper challenge to the revolutionary standpoint can be imagined. Mr Roosevelt affirms his loyalty to the established doctrine that ours is still a living Constitution, ample for all our needs, and not the derelict Mumbo Jumbo depicted by radical critics.

One of the saddest phases of our depression psychology was the dogma of frustration which seized on the young men. They were the college-trained youth between twenty-five and thirty, for whom the door of opportunity was assumed to be definitely closed. An era had come to an end. Advancement in any line had become rare; the chance to go into business for oneself, hitherto the chief goal of American ambition, no longer existed. The young people thought of themselves as a lost generation like

the Lost Generation that was supposed to have been destroyed by the World War and of which so much was heard in the literary and art debates of the years between 1920 and 1930. To be sure, there was a paradox even in the lost generation of post-Armistice intellectuals and writers and artists. It insisted on calling itself a lost generation, but it boasted of creating a literature and an art and a criticism better than anything that had been done in America in the preceding seventy-five years. The young men of the '20s were proud of having destroyed the Genteel Tradition, of having assailed American Puritanism in its strongholds, of having laid the foundations for an honest and courageous understanding and interpretation of American life. They were proud of their pioneer labors, yet they spoke of themselves as lost.

Outside of the intellectual field the doctrine of a postwar lost generation was in instant and glaring contradiction with the facts. The young men who in 1917-19 were eighteen to twenty-five years old must have been in 1929 thirty to thirty-five years old. Would that age-class of Americans as we find it in 1929 on the eve of the debacle impress any casual observer as a lost generation? Actually we find the young men, in their own graphic phrase, sitting on top of the world. In the tremendous swirl and activity of the Great Boom these young men had come to the fore both as leaders and as sturdy rank and file. Unless we wish to argue that the very sweep and fever of the bull market was a sign of moral breakdown engendered by the World War, the lost generation of the 1920s was a myth.

We may say the same thing of the lost generation of the 1930s. Jobs were no doubt harder to get for the college graduates of 1929-39 than for the graduates of ten years earlier. Wages were lower. Opportunity, for some time to come, was at best restricted. What chance to marry and found a family had the young man of the depression era in the face of insecure employment and low wages and increased family responsibilities in the paternal home?

Youth's special problems took on additional gloom from the prevalent social-economic doctrines of despair. To such doctrines Youth's own condition contributed, but to a considerable extent Youth's hopeless feeling about itself was encouraged by sympathy from the outside, most often well meant no doubt, but not infrequently the voice of an exaggerated professional ardor. It was quite proper to speak of a Youth Movement, but people were soon speaking catastrophically of a Youth Rescue Movement. Such a Youth Rescue Movement was announced in 1935 at Washington the same day that Washington issued a report showing that college and high-school graduates did find jobs. College

placement bureaus reported that by the beginning of every Fall something like 90 per cent of their Spring graduates were placed. To be sure, these were less desirable situations than they would have found in better days, but it is hardly a situation consonant with Youth Rescue Movements.

We must remember, in speaking of the college generation of 1927-33, that the depression strongly tended to turn into social discontent what would normally have been a private grief, or even a cheerfully accepted experience. This furnishes a parallel to the nation's unemployment figures, which henceforth under the best of circumstances will continue to be three or four million higher than before 1929 by the mere fact of rejecting "normal" unemployment. Before 1929 there were always three million people out of work for various reasons. Today they swell the unemployment figures. It was always a matter of course for seasonal workers in the building and garment trades to be out of work for several months in the year. Now they become, during the slack season, a part of the unemployed statistics. So, to get back to our argument, there have always been young college men whose progress in the world was slow and definitely limited. They formerly blamed "the world"; now they can blame the economic system. In all ages a large number of young men have found their economic progress hampered by unhappy emotional experiences or poor health or family misfortunes or sheer accident. In the depression it became the understandable human habit to place the blame for it all on the economic system.

One thing should be said in all fairness. Even for the young man of mediocre talents there are, obviously, better opportunities when times are good. In boom times every businessman makes money and everybody willing to work earns good wages. When the iron broom of hard times begins to sweep it is the less competent who suffer first. In the rush of World War prosperity raw lads from the Appalachians earned silk-shirt wages in the factories. Farmers sold wheat at two dollars and twenty cents a bushel. Merchants made money because they could not help it. After a while it is hard to readjust oneself to a world without silk shirts and only dollar wheat and buyers' markets.

The sudden contraction of a field of opportunity which had enormously expanded in the ten years prior to 1929 confronted the young men of the professional and the white-collar class. Take the college graduate of the 1930s in search of a reporter's job on a newspaper. In the year 1920 there were thirty-four thousand men in the United States so engaged. In the 1930 census there were fifty-two thousand writing jobs on the newspapers. The population of the country had grown sixteen

per cent and the number of newspaper jobs had gone up fifty per cent. But the young men of 1930-35 who knocked vainly at the managing editor's door would not draw comparisons with 1920, but with the boom years ending in 1930. In the same way, we note that the population of the country in the decade before 1930 had increased by something under one sixth, but the number of college teachers had virtually doubled, going up from 33,500 to sixty-two thousand; the number of authors had very nearly doubled; the number of artists, sculptors and art teachers had risen more than sixty per cent; the musicians had gone up twenty-five per cent; the lawyers had gone up thirty-three per cent, the school-teachers thirty-five per cent, the engineers nearly seventy per cent. If we take the whole professional class as enumerated in the 1930 census we find that it grew nearly fifty per cent in the preceding ten years. But again the young man or woman hit by depression in 1932-35 could not be expected to remember that in 1930 there were in the country 1,200,000 more professional jobs than in 1920, and there had been an increase of one million jobs in the clerical occupations. This was a gain of thirty-three per cent, or twice the rate of population growth. Up to the year 1930 the country swarmed with opportunity and the drop into depression was all the harder a shock.

We cannot expect young people who are looking for work in 1935, or even in 1940, to take the philosophical long-time view of the employment cycle; but the observer of the whole American scene is bound to take a more objective stand. He must make long-time comparisons. After two or three years of the depression the business indices gave up using the year 1929 as a base; the contrast with existing conditions was too chilling. They adopted the much lower plateau of 1923-25 as a base. If we similarly adopt for the purpose of measuring Youth's opportunities a less ambitious yardstick than the fat years of the Boom, the present status of Youth becomes far less catastrophic.

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CHAPTER XXII

The Ways of Democracy

ON THE FRONT PAGE of the principal New York newspapers for Sunday, December 8, 1935, there appeared a narrative which might well be used as text and summary for a chapter on the spirit of America. Democracy, equality, materialism, speed, the standard of living, pioneers, and Frontier—they are all contained in the airplane odyssey of young Mrs Ossie Drimmer and her infant son from Los Angeles to the deck of the steamship Gripsholm in Ambrose Channel, off New York. The young woman had been in the United States only two months when she was seized with an irresistible longing to spend Christmas with her parents in Gothenburg, Sweden. Passage was engaged for her on the Swedish liner sailing from New York in the early afternoon of Saturday, December 7, and Mrs Drimmer boarded a plane for New York. Headwinds delayed the flight, and before the plane had reached Cleveland it was evident that it would arrive too late for the ship. A wireless exchange of messages with the liner brought the promise that it would be held at Ambrose Channel until four o'clock in the afternoon; but even this respite was not enough. Therefore at the Cleveland airport Mrs Drimmer changed from an American Airways plane to a United Airlines plane to make a better connection. At the Newark, New Jersey, airport she chartered a private seaplane which made its landing in the rough waters of Ambrose Channel. The pilot boat at that point sent out a yawl which conveyed the impatient young woman and her son of eighteen months to the deck of the pilot vessel, which in turn delivered her at an open port in the side of the liner.

And who was this young woman in whose behalf there were mobilized three airplanes, wireless and the United States pilot service, and for whom a great ship consented to wait half an hour at the dock in

New York and an indefinite time outside of New York Harbor? She was not the daughter of one of Europe's great families or the kin of one of our own historic millionaire or Hollywood families. Her young husband was studying to be a chiropractor in Los Angeles, and she was bitterly lonely for her mother in Sweden.

The incident becomes all the more American because the chief protagonists are such very new Americans. The young woman had been only two months in the country. The husband, though apparently a longer resident in the United States, had turned to the old homeland for a bride. Yet the behavior of these newcomers was in the national tradition. The lavishness of it is American. It is hard to think of any other country where persons in apparently modest circumstances would travel by airplane when comfortable cheaper trains and still cheaper motorbuses across the continent were available. In scarcely any other country would a transatlantic liner be held for a passenger of fairly humble position. In no other country would the complex apparatus of modern communication and transportation be mobilized so readily, and with such evident delight in the feat itself. In no other country would the story of the homesick young woman have received such a display in the newspapers. The skeptic might suggest that the incident does not lack a suggestion of the press agent's skilled touch. Airline companies were not averse to showing the public what efforts they are prepared to make in the spirit of Service. The steamship companies may not have been indifferent to the publicity value of a first-page newspaper story, but that would only be one more American trait. The basic idea that any man is as good as another if he has the price; the American lavishness which will pay that price; the love for the whirl of machines—it was later suggested that the young woman could have taken her time and found plenty of ships to get her home to Sweden by Christmas—the basic love for making a record—these things all appear in our story. It could not have happened in any other country, including the young woman's native democratic Sweden, because of the accepted doctrine, in which the young woman herself would have acquiesced, that for small people such things are not done. But America is the land where the Negro elevator boy after hours sits down to have his shoes polished by a professional bootblack, and tips him, too.

Shakespeare presumably got from Plutarch the theme of the fickle crowd. It is a favorite topic with the poet and appears elsewhere than in

the oratorical contest between Brutus and Mark Antony over the body of Julius Caesar. The crowd which applauds the execution of a tyrant and half an hour later weeps over his martyred corpse, crying vengeance on his slayers, is an ancient tradition; the conventions of the stage permit things to be done in a few minutes which in real life may take hours or days or weeks. Mark Antony's speech incorporates all the stock vices of the mob. The mob is ignorant, unstable, cowardly, cruel and venal. Mark Antony begins by appealing to Caesar's patriotic services and ends by reading Caesar's will with its generous bequests to the populace. The mob can be cajoled, intimidated, bought. Its latent savagery is always near the surface. The inconstant crowd, the *mobile vulgus*, may become the raging mob, the poet Horace's *saeva turba Quiritium*.

But there are mobs and there is the Mob. There are crowds and there is the Crowd, and while it is quite true that plain people at all times have been swayed and bought by demagogues, this is far from true of the generality of men. The masses are not fickle. They are rather the steadfast element in the population. It is the upper classes that are so often fickle. More properly than the *mobile vulgus* one might say the mobile elite. The crowd is not fickle when it joins in shouting, "The King is dead, Long live the King!" The crowd has never stood in personal relationship to the dead monarch. To the crowd the King is only the Kingship, and the man in the street can cheer Harry the living, after cheering Harry the dead, in all sincerity and consistency because in both cases it is the Crown that he is cheering. It is a different case with the chosen few who have known the dead Harry both as person and as King. They have ministered to him, lived with him, eaten with him, taken their pleasure with him. When such a courtier cries, "The King is dead, Long live the King!" he is own brother to Shakespeare's First Citizen listening to Mark Antony; he is a creature of fears and self-interest.

The tradition of the fickle mob in the ancient world comes from the Greek cities and their inveterate party quarrels. Politicians would be outvoted, banished, recalled in soberer moments. Themistocles contends with Aristides, and the latter is "ostracized" or exiled, to come back in time of foreign invasion and fight for his city. Tradition chose to take for its type of the mob the illiterate Athenian citizen who voted to send off Aristides into exile because he was tired of hearing him called Aristides the Just. That particular voter may have shown the vicious streak, but the Athenian majority or plurality that cast out Aristides was making use of a clause in the Athenian Constitution inserted for the very purpose of ensuring public tranquillity. In any event our ten

thousand Athenian citizens did not line up nine thousand for Themistocles and one thousand for Aristides on one occasion, and nine thousand for Aristides and one thousand for Themistocles on another occasion; speaking, of course, of purely hypothetical occasions. It might very well be a division of six thousand Athenian voters against four thousand, or even closer. At all times in Athens there were probably four thousand Themistocles die-hards and four thousand Aristides standpatters. The balance of power was held by one Athenian in every five. Only one fellow citizen of Aristides in every five can be suspected of voting against him because he was Aristides the Just.

This is conjecture in the specific instance, but is not baseless theorizing. In the United States since the Armistice it has been a period of landslide elections. In 1928 the Republicans elect Herbert Hoover by a plurality of six million votes in a poll of thirty-six million votes. Four years later the Democrats elect Franklin D. Roosevelt by a plurality of seven million votes in a poll of forty million votes. Here would be a case of the fickle crowd, except that we know that fickleness certainly does not describe the mood which produced such an enormous reversal in American popular sentiment in the course of four years.

A six-million Hoover plurality changing into a seven-million Roosevelt plurality in a poll of forty million votes is a change of allegiance by only one voter in every six. The crushing defeat of Alfred E. Smith by Herbert Hoover in 1928 followed by the crushing defeat of Herbert Hoover in 1932 would apparently be overwhelming proof of how the people, the *vulgus*, the mob, will swing from side to side under the pressure of self-interest or passion. Yet the wonder is really the other way. The wonder is the constancy of the masses which in the defeat of Alfred E. Smith held more than fifteen million Democrats faithful to their party in a campaign marked by such bitter dissensions. The wonder is that in 1932, after the worst business collapse in our history, there were nearly sixteen million Republicans who remained loyal to the Republican candidate. Speaking in the language of democratic government we say rightly that in 1932 the country turned against Mr Hoover as the country turned against Governor Smith in 1928. But it was only one sixth of the country that turned in both instances. Five voters in six remained steadfast.

We may take the most outstanding example of mob action in all history. Today after so many new revolutions and mobs it is still true that mob to the average man calls up first of all the French Revolution. Paris remains the home town of the classic mob. The mob stormed the Bastille, brought the King from Versailles to Paris, stormed the Tuileries,

massacred the September prisoners, and then in accelerated tempo cheered the tumblers on their way to the guillotine with the popular heroes of the day before.

But here again we must distinguish between mobs and the Mob, between crowds and the Crowd. In swift successive chapters of the Terror the populace of Paris destroyed the Girondists, Danton and Robespierre, but it was not really the same populace except for that marginal floating vote which changes minorities into majorities. The mob that jeered at Danton was not composed of his recent followers. In a Paris of a million people there were enough Robespierrians to jeer Danton on his way to the guillotine, and when Robespierre went to the guillotine there were enough hidden royalists and vengeful Dantonists to curse Robespierre. Paris as a whole shifted from side to side as the majorities shifted; but again it was a comparatively small fraction exercising the balance of power.

The complete answer to the ancient legend of the fickle crowd which is clay in the hands of the demagogue is the equally venerable tradition of the inert and stagnant masses who must be wrenched and blasted out of their immobility. As the exigencies of the moment dictate the masses are always in riot or they are always asleep.

The fickle and ignorant crowd had an extraordinary vogue in the years after the Armistice. These harsh adjectives were not often directly employed, but actually they describe the basic assumptions of the whole doctrine of Propaganda and mass manipulation which bulked so large in the thinking and writing of the time. It is a theme which we have discussed in some detail elsewhere in this volume. Here it is enough to say that the propaganda-cum-manipulation theory arose out of the World War and the vast machinery of debate and persuasion which the war brought into play. In a world full of special pleaders the notion established itself that the best special pleader was bound to win; that the process of persuasion, in other words, was a unilateral process in which the advocate was everything and the audience was nothing. The public became in such doctrines a phantom or a puppet. The public always believed what it was told and acted accordingly. In this sense the doctrine of an all-powerful propaganda is the old doctrine of the fickle and ignorant crowd. Because the crowd is ignorant it believed what Mark Antony said. Because it is fickle it is easily carried away by propaganda.

Our Presidential elections after the Armistice were an unbroken succession of landslides and tidal waves, and this fact would lend itself to the propaganda doctrine. As the huge pluralities swung from one side to the other what could it be but the ignorant and volatile masses under

the spell of the siren voice and magic touch from the outside? Actually we have seen that our thundering postwar plebiscites might be interpreted in just the contrary fashion. We must think not only of millions of voters who swung from side to side but of five times as many millions who held steadfast in an era of earthquake and deluge. From that statistical point we might go on to ask what were the forces acting on the mobile part of the electorate, the millions who did shift. Did they change because of what they were told and made to believe or because of what they knew for themselves?

The propaganda theory of public opinion and mass behavior was pretty well spent at the beginning of Mr Roosevelt's second administration; and one reason was the huge and unprecedented size of Mr Roosevelt's victory in 1936. The winning side would naturally refuse to entertain the idea that its magnificent victory could be due to anything but the merit of its cause; and even the losers would find it hard to explain away a plurality of eleven million votes as propaganda and manipulation. Thus we find in this second Roosevelt term even professional students of public opinion abjuring the propaganda doctrine and swinging to the opposite extreme where they doubted whether election campaigning in a Presidential year is worth while. By the time the National Conventions have met and named the candidates the American people has made up its mind, if not indeed long before the nominations. Experts in testing and sampling public opinion began to report that the mass of voters is not swayed by what other people tell them but by the impact of events on their daily lives. Votes are determined by prosperity and depression, by the size of a man's income, to a considerable extent by age grouping. The younger people in 1936 were stronger for Mr Roosevelt than the older folk in the same economic class.

Even where ideas from the outside make their impact on the popular mind they make themselves felt through the channel of material interest. They appeal to everyday experience. The prestige of Soviet Russia in our country dates from the first Soviet Five-Year Plan in 1928-33 with its real or alleged triumphs in large-scale industrialization. In itself the Socialist ideal had no charm for the average American. To the extent that he showed a friendly interest in Soviet Russia it was the old democratic tradition of sympathy for an oppressed people which had shaken off the yoke; but in the main it cannot be said that abstract considerations of social justice and freedom were noticeably effective in winning popular American interest for the Soviet experiment. With the inauguration of the Five-Year Plan it ceased to be abstract principle: Soviet Russia was doing things. Soviet Russia was building factories and power

stations and opening up oil wells and collective farms at a tremendous rate. Soviet statistics began to cast their spell over the minds of other nations, the United States among them. The dazzling Soviet results grew more impressive as American courage sagged under the weight of the depression at home. As our own economic indices grew sicker the American people read with mounting respect the news from Moscow in terms of pig iron, steel, platinum, manganese, cement, brick, coal, petroleum, kilowatts, railway mileage, railway freight, housing, subways, canals. There was, to be sure, frequent mention of human interests like schools, sanatoria and theaters, but they did not bulk large in the general argument. The headline news was about Soviet Russia as a huge economic success at a time when America was an economic cripple.

And yet even in this very human weakness of bowing to success it should be noted that the average American businessman, farmer or worker displayed a shrewder insight into realities and a sounder critical sense than many writers and commentators on Soviet Russia from the colleges and the professions. No doubt it is inevitable that a social adventure of such vast implications as Soviet Russia should enlist the sympathy of idealistic men and women who are not always inclined nor, to be quite frank, always qualified to apply the rigid methods of the scientific observer. Soviet Russia was the theme of many visitors to Moscow who took the promise for the deed, the project for the fact, the colored poster for the final victory. Statistics of Soviet industrial production moved in an atmosphere of moral fervor.

Far more realistic was the attitude of the bulk of organized American labor towards the Soviet record and its lesson for America. The concrete Soviet figures were subjected to closer scrutiny in Labor editorials than in the editorials of intellectualist journals. Doubts about the future of our economic system, nourished by Soviet success and capitalist prostration, were stronger in the colleges than in the trade unions. More than once we have cited the fact that as late as 1931, after two years of business depression, the American Federation of Labor was still opposed to unemployment insurance.

From this conservative attitude American labor was finally driven by the ever-lengthening perspective of the depression. The thing to note, however, is that if the American people has been brought nearer to "collectivist" action—for industry, collective bargaining and social security; for the farmers, Government crop control and Government bounties—it has been education by events and not by theory. It was not propaganda that produced the huge Roosevelt majorities of 1936 but the impact of events. The American people were not indoctrinated by some-

body away from individualism and towards paternalism; they were confronted by a condition and not a theory. In the rank and file of the American democracy the great proselytizers were employment, hours, wages, prices: the facts of life.

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Words, like books in the old Latin aphorism, have their destiny. Changes in the public temper, changes in intellectual fashion, will seize upon a familiar word, empty it of its familiar meaning and twist it to uses sometimes the exact opposite of its original tenor. This is what happened in the years after 1929 to the word "dream" as in the American Dream, and to the proper name Middletown as found in the title of a well-known sociological treatise of the period.

A dream may be an aspiration, or it may be an illusion or, even sadder, a delusion. When people speak of the dream of a happy life or the dream of a serene and comfortable old age they do not describe a goal which they expect to reach but one which they expect only to approach, since it is not given to man to attain full happiness or full security or perfection in any field. Because the ideal is unattainable, it is a dream; because we are under no illusions concerning the outcome, it is not an illusion. It is an aspiration, a purpose, an incentive, and to speak of a man's dream is to suggest a man happy in the possession of a goal and hoping that it will be given to him to make some approach to that goal.

The generations before the World War and especially before the economic collapse of 1929 spoke in this sense of the American dream of a free and prosperous people, dedicated to the proposition that all men are born equal and in enjoyment of equal opportunity. It was an ideal to be striven for and obviously one that could not be universally realized. Glaring exceptions and contradictions would always confront the American people. To narrow the gap between goal and achievement was the nation's historic task. Shortcomings and failures were not a confession of general failure. The American dream was a goal and a purpose, a reality. One follows the dream as one follows the gleam—upwards and onwards.

In the years of business depression the American dream became in common usage the American illusion and delusion, the American tragedy. The dream of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all men no longer cheered men's hearts. It was invoked to chill their hearts. The emphasis shifted from, let us say, the five men in every ten

who had found opportunity to the five men who had been denied opportunity. The American dream changed from a goal and an affirmation to a will-o'-the-wisp. It was a change induced by the very real troubles which beset the American people after 1929, but also a change emphasized by the peculiar American susceptibility to fashions in thinking and in slogans.

Middletown, a study by the sociologists Robert S. Lynd and Helen Lynd, appeared in 1929 on the eve of the economic collapse. The book had the merit of being eminently readable, highly competent, objective, scholarly. It was exactly what the name Middletown suggested—the story of a middle-sized, Middle-Western, middle-class town; the original was Muncie, Indiana. But it happened that in 1929 we were not quite emerged from the pagan and anti-Babbitt epoch, and some of our thinking began to feel the impress of anticapitalist phraseology. There attached itself a stigma to Middletown because it was middle class, because it was petty bourgeois. This would be a sufficiently proper attitude for sophisticates in revolt against the dullness of middle-class civilization and its ethics; and our postwar pagans would not have denied that Middletown if dull was also snug and comfortable or, if we will, stuffy. But the disillusioned post-1929 depression temper did to Middletown what it did to the American Dream. The authors had painted a small American city in the round, fairly prosperous and fairly happy, but it became the fashion to use Middletown to suggest a state of things somewhere between Upton Sinclair's *Jungle* and *Les Misérables*. Actually the picture drawn in *Middletown* was the Penrod-and-Sam civilization of Booth Tarkington. It was the traditional Main Street and Middle West of the American Dream; though undeniably Mr Tarkington did not concern himself greatly with the people on the other side of the railroad tracks.

Half a dozen years after the onset of the depression the authors of *Middletown* made a second study of life and civilization in Muncie, Indiana, and published their findings in 1937 under the title *Middletown in Transition*. In the Spring of that year Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace made a public address in New York on the subject of co-operative societies. He was sympathetic to the co-operative idea but he had his reservations.

It must, however, be realized [said Mr Wallace], that the psychology and environment of the people of the United States is so different from the psychology and environment of the people in Northern Europe that many adaptations will have to be made to utilize their methods here.

The second report on Middletown by the Lynds completely bore out Secretary Wallace's reminder of notable differences in temper and environment between the United States and even the democratic nations of Northern Europe. It was the gist of the second Lynd report that Middletown might be living in a period of transition but that Middletown itself, in its soul and basic way of life, was not in transition. It was, essentially, the Middletown of ten years earlier, before the 1929 crash. This apparently was not quite what the investigators expected to find after so troubled, so momentous a decade, after half a dozen years of business prostration. It was not the Middletown that many commentators on the Lynd report in 1937 had expected to find. They had been waiting for evidence of rising class antagonisms which did not appear. Signs of social tension might be discerned in Middletown, but as the symptoms are enumerated it becomes evident that they have been there since the beginning of the United States, if not indeed the beginning of America. The authors of *Middletown* themselves would seem to betray now and then a touch of surprise at the slightness of the change in the patient's condition. Again and again they test for "class feeling" but can only report symptoms of group feeling. It is only the old demarcation between people on different sides of the railroad tracks, and slighter gradations within each division. No less than seven social strata are identified—the old middle class now hardening into an upper class, small manufacturers, merchants and higher-salaried employees, the humbler tradespeople and salaried workers, skilled wage earners, semi-skilled and unskilled labor, a layer of "poor whites," a Negro layer at the bottom. But plainly what we have here is a more refined sociological technique and vocabulary rather than deeply marked social changes. For those who come to Middletown looking for traces of a possible American variety of "Fascism" there is no comfort in the Lynd report. They find a community where pulpit and press support the "reigning economy," even as pulpit and press did a hundred years ago in the United States. As late as 1937 Muncie-Middletown is summed up by one commentator on the Lynd volume as a "sober, hopeful, well-meaning city" whose inhabitants want "to believe themselves country-town Americans grown up." Another reviewer's report on *Middletown* is summed up in the brief finding, "Babbitt still runs Middletown."

Muncie-Middletown lies in Delaware County, Indiana, which cast in the 1936 election nineteen thousand votes for President Roosevelt against fourteen thousand votes for his Republican opponent, Governor Landon. Four years earlier it remained faithful to Mr Hoover by two thousand votes though he lost the state by nearly two hundred thou-

sand votes. In 1928 Delaware County gave Mr Hoover nineteen thousand votes against eighty-five hundred for Alfred E. Smith. The change from nineteen thousand Hoover votes to nineteen thousand Roosevelt votes in the space of eight years was consistent, however, with Middletown remaining in 1936 the hopeful, well-meaning city of the year 1928. There may be such a thing as people wishing to believe that the American Dream is a delusion and becoming the victims of their own delusion.

4

Out of the democracy of Middletown, which even in 1937 is discovered to be America in miniature, stems the uniformity of American life. We have spoken elsewhere of the legend which depicts life in the United States as a flat monotone and life everywhere else as a complex and vivid play of light and color. We have seen how greatly exaggerated is the tradition of our horizontal, geographical uniformity. From their common interest in automobiles, roadside refreshment stands, motion pictures and breakfast foods, it does not follow that we cannot tell apart Maine, Missouri, Mississippi, New Mexico, California and Indiana. But it is true that vertical uniformity, as between individual and individual, between trade and trade, between class and class, characterizes American life beyond the older European civilization, even now when life in the greater part of Europe is being ironed out to the uniformity of the army or militia uniform.

Compared with the free peoples of Europe, individuality with us lags behind individualism. Personal initiative and free enterprise remain the basic natural creed after the searching criticism of recent years; but at all times we have taken it for granted that free initiative shall be directed to the realization of uniform ends. Men are to be left free to be as much like each other as they can manage to be, to strive for the same objectives, to conform to the national ethos. Personal eccentricity is not as freely recognized to be a basic human right as it is in England, the traditional home of humors and "characters." What they call in England a character we are apt in this country to call a bad citizen. It is not in the national tradition for a man to live alone with his thoughts. A man is here to be his brother's keeper. To neglect one's brother, his tax problems and his sanitary problems, his public-school problems and his drinking habits, while one concentrates on watching one's own soul or watching the stars in Andromeda, is antisocial behavior. The right to go one's own way is not admitted, even if it involves spoiling a good poet or a good astronomer, to make one more good citizen. America

applies to the whole social and political structure the standard of manners which holds everywhere for the drawing room. In any country the man who in a social gathering has no conversation, no response and no warmth, is a boor. The American idea is not friendly to the communal boor, so to speak—to the man who cannot or will not make the attempt, at a sacrifice of time and effort, to make things pleasanter for everybody. Everybody is expected, when called upon, to have a message to deliver. If the citizen so honored and embarrassed has no message for humanity he will try to think of one. Lack of grace or ease in public speaking is no bar to every man's doing his after-dinner duty. One can always think of a good story to tell; with a little trouble one can always wrench the anecdote to the special occasion, and a man's social duty will have been done. It need not even be well done. Merely to have tried to tell a funny story after dinner is to have done something for one's fellow men. If nothing else, the speaker's poor showing will give his listeners a better conceit of themselves; it enhances their personality.

The sense of fraternity is at the bottom of the powerful forces that work for American uniformity and against what may be called the reticence of the individual soul. The ancient slander has it that democracy is hostile to individuality because the mob resents and hates eminence. The kindlier and truer diagnosis is that the American creed insists on individual talent being primarily dedicated to the common use, and the man who is too exclusively concerned with the state of his own soul is likely to forget that he is, after all, brother to every other man in the community. Democracy does not resent superior talent as much as it resents the claim to a superior humanity; and in that respect its instincts are sound. Julius Caesar objects to Cassius because he thinks too much: such men are dangerous. The democracy may have this same dread of individuals who by thinking too much estrange themselves from the daily routine of human fellowship.

Uniformity thrives in the absence of class distinctions. Overalls are a uniform, and from overalls to overalls is really less than three generations. At no time in the homes of wealth and fashion in the United States are the memory and the instincts of the ancestral overalls very far away. It is the old story of the American shopgirl who strives to dress like her wealthy customers and who very often succeeds in doing so, to the ordinary eye at least. In other countries the years after the World War did something to soften the contrast between the derby- or fedora-wearing population and the cap-wearing population, between the shopgirl and the lady; but the lines of division are still marked. English street crowds in caps are the rule rather than the exception. American

crowds are much more uniform because we lack class uniforms. It takes more than one look to distinguish a convention of bankers, of bank clerks, and of trade-union delegates; and if the time be a midsummer day, showing the dominant national warm-weather uniform of shirt sleeves, it will be harder than ever to tell one group from another.

In the United States the specialist in any field stands much nearer to his undifferentiated countrymen than in any other country. The expert is closer to the man in the street in appearance and psychology. The professional type with us can hardly be said to exist at all, outside of the single calling of the clergy. When James Bryce, in a survey of American institutions and commercial agencies, devotes a chapter to the Bar, the word is odd to the ear in the sense in which Bryce uses it. We have Bar Associations which play a not inconspicuous part in public affairs, and indeed the lawyers of the nation may be said to dominate its public life. But with us the Bar does not constitute, as it does in England and France, almost a caste, with a body of tradition, a way of life, sufficiently differentiated to create a type. This is true in Europe also of the Church, the Army, the Universities, the Civil Service. In every case we find not only a separate professional interest but an individualized body of practice sometimes extending to cultivated peculiarities of dress, food, play. With us a Bar Association is predominantly a trade association for the promotion of trade interests, but exerting no influence on the private life of its members. We have Bar Associations just as we have trade unions of plumbers, carpenters and garment workers, and as we have medical societies; but the English legal type or the Harley Street type of English doctor cannot be said to exist in this country. We may say almost as much about the college teacher. For all his supposed isolation from the world of affairs, he is not always easy to tell apart from the lawyer and the doctor; though we may have our exceptions in ancient places of learning like Harvard University where an approach to the English don or the European savant may be found—the joint product of New England tradition, culture and wealth. The members of the learned professions in the United States dress very much like each other and like American businessmen in the same income ranks, and seek the same recreations. Taste with us divides horizontally along the lines of income and not vertically along trade interests. The colleges will bow almost as readily as the businessmen or the doctors or the lawyers to the dictates of the popular book of the season, the popular play, the popular art and music.

The absence of professional caste is the chief reason for the absence of professional types. The doctor, the lawyer and the college professor

are drawn from the same stratum of the population as the businessman; and their training is in large measure the same. More than half of our college graduates go into business, but they have lived for eight years in high school and college with the men who are going into law, medicine and teaching, and by that time a man's tastes and predilections are usually formed. The young Englishman who prepares for a business career does not very often reach the University, unless he is the heir to a commercial principality. So much stress used to be laid on the chance which every poor American boy had to become a millionaire or President of the United States that we were apt to overlook the chance which every poor American boy had to become a doctor, a lawyer, a minister, a judge.

The story of American uniformity and absence of types is perhaps best told in the fact, universally recognized and in some quarters deplored, that the American workingman possesses the "capitalist psychology." Much less is said of the highly interesting fact that the American capitalist is not very capitalistic. The American big businessman is still temperamentally fresh from the overalls. Henry Ford, the other automobile and oil and railroad and chain-store kings are not the capitalists of economic theory, the class-conscious representatives of a class. They are individuals of the old ironmaster type who by definition might be capitalists, but who more correctly would be described as individualists. We may speak in the United States of the middle classes, but the mind rejects the picture of a bourgeoisie after the French model, the distinction between a workingman and a "gentleman" after the English fashion. Our society is more fluid today than it was one hundred and twenty-five years ago, before the Jacksonian democratic revolution. At that time the merchant and the "mechanic" were further apart than today when so many of the automobile kings are former bicycle mechanics. The average trade-union member today thinks like a capitalist, and the capitalist has retained craft-worker instincts. The farmer is a good deal of a machine tinkerer, and the city worker is nearer to the soil than he is in other industrial countries. Our uniformity is greater than elsewhere with the important proviso that uniformity is not monotony except to the spectator from the outside. After all, one must be a traveler to enjoy the variegated spectacle of half a dozen different provincial civilizations in a single European country. The people themselves stay in their own province and live their uniform life there.

5

The outstanding role of the lawyer in our democracy follows logically from the ideal of a government of laws and not of men, though other factors, as we shall see, help to give the man with legal training first place in public life. Logic does not require that laws shall be made by lawyers, but the interpretation of laws does seem to call for special knowledge. With us the lawyers both enact and interpret. President Franklin Roosevelt in a passage at arms with his political opponents on one occasion drew the contrast between plain forward-looking social-minded citizens and the reactionary legal profession. But if a congenital Toryism is the mark of the lawyer it would follow that the whole American record from the very beginnings of the nation should be one of consistent opposition to progress.

In the contest over President Roosevelt's proposed enlargement of the Supreme Court in 1937 Mr Roosevelt's description of the Federal Constitution as a "layman's document" was sharply challenged by the head of the American Bar Association, who declared that out of fifty-five members of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 the lawyers were thirty-two, and out of fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence the lawyers were twenty-five. In the lower house of the New York Legislature in 1939 the lawyers were seventy out of one hundred and fifty members. It is an American constant, this exceptional prominence of the lawyer in our public life, as compared with that of Great Britain. The basic reason is that over here we have had no landed gentry with a proprietary interest in the business of government. To be sure, the English lawyer bulks large in politics and in history, but with us the law might be said to constitute almost the sole approach to public office; it is certainly the chief preparation by overwhelming odds, even if we find a number of amateurs among the twenty-two Presidents of the United States who have been called lawyers. The list includes Woodrow Wilson, whose one year of law practice at Atlanta before he resumed his academic career would hardly make him a lawyer, though he did study law in the University of Virginia and with a view to entering public life. The national tradition begins with a written Constitution and runs back of that for nearly two centuries to written charters and deeds; and the business of drafting documents, construing and enforcing them is obviously a lawyer's business.

That would be one reason why even the Founding Fathers, though living in a predominantly agricultural economy, had so many lawyers

among them. Another reason would be the great mobility of American life, even in those simple days. After 1750, let us say, we have a rapidly growing population and a frontier moving westward with mighty strides. In 1760 the population of the Thirteen Colonies was something over a million and a half. Thirty years later in our first national census it was nearly four million. A population more than doubling in a single generation and an occupied area rapidly expanding make up a pattern of rapidly shifting legal relationships compared with the stability of life, rights and tenures in England. A war of seven years and a political revolution were superimposed on natural growth. The rupture of ties with Great Britain was accompanied by a churning up of the whole social compound which would involve definition and redefinition and make work for the lawyers.

Growth, change and movement in American life have retained their own tempo into our own day. This country, with one fifteenth of the world's population, accounts for nearly one half of the world's industrial production. It is a corollary that we have a higher per capita consumption of lawyers to help us look after this great volume of business in a world that lives by contract. We need only think of the amount of real-estate law in the last hundred years which have seen the occupation of the continent between the Mississippi and the Pacific Ocean. We need only compare the amount of land-title business in the course of a century in the city of New York, which grew from two hundred and fifty thousand people in 1830 to seven million in 1930, and in London, which today has the same population as New York but in 1830 had one and a half million people. New York has grown six times as fast as London and building lots and houses have been bought and sold in something like the same proportion. So we may compare the average duration of apartment tenancy in New York, which is two years, with the long-term London leases and the general fixity of English residential habits. And while we are speaking of apartments and homes we may glance at the comparative turnover in the social unit which occupies homes and apartments, namely, the family. Our divorce rate is now something like one divorce for every six or seven marriages; in Great Britain the rate is still microscopic though divorce is being made easier and cheaper. Our more than two hundred thousand divorces a year will support a small army of lawyers. Our patent lawyers do business in a country which issues nearly one hundred thousand patents a year—or five times as many as in Great Britain, though we have less than three times the population.

We have, then, an exceptional volume of law business commensurate

with the country's impressive economic status and the pace of American life. It may be called the natural condition. On top of this we have the multiplicity of American laws arising from the dual nature of our government, Federal and state, and the cumbersome technique, not to say clutter, of our legal procedure of which we have spoken elsewhere. A lawless people by comparison with the people of Great Britain, we take delight in playing with the machinery of justice. Our laws are many in number and verbose in form. Our criminal trials consume days where the British procedure takes hours. Weeks are sometimes spent in selecting a jury. We pile up mountains of testimony, in criminal cases, in hearings before referees, in public hearings. Witnesses will read into the record, as the phrase goes, "statements" of endless thousands of words, entire volumes. In 1937 a candidate for Congress from New York City pledged himself to concentrate on the repeal of statutes, of which nine hundred were approved by President Roosevelt for one session of Congress.

To move about in such a legal jungle the businessmen of the nation find that they need trained guides; hence the intervention of the lawyer at every step. After all, in every country the lawyer or notary is the agent in the most important affairs of life; in the United States we have enormously developed the role of the agent in every field. A love of specialization passes into a love of gadgetry. The national passion is for saving time and labor even when we have no other use for the time and labor saved. We hire income-tax specialists to supply a much-needed service, but we also hire specialists to buy our theater tickets and steamship tickets, to find apartments for us and furnish them. It is a paradox that the division of labor has been carried to what are sometimes fantastic extremes by a people inheriting the Yankee tradition of jack-of-all-trades. Americans in an emergency can turn their hands to anything; yet employment has had an enormous expansion in the service occupations. Between 1910 and 1930 the number of workers in the primary occupations—agriculture, mining, industry and transportation—rose from twenty-seven million to thirty million, an increase of something over ten per cent. The workers in the service occupations—trade, professions, clerical and domestic workers—rose from eleven million to nineteen million, a growth of nearly seventy-five per cent. In actual numbers the service workers grew three times as fast as all the other occupations. In percentage of increase they grew nearly seven times as fast. And among all the learned professions the lawyer's is the basic service profession. He services all the others, and also, as we have seen, the government of the country.

6

Distributism is the doctrine which holds that the only secure foundation for democracy is the small property owner, and especially the small farmer. Distributionists quote the maxim of John Adams that power follows property. The only true democracy is one where ownership is widespread. Where economic democracy does not exist by the side of political democracy, the latter is only a sham. The plea formulated by G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc in behalf of the vanished democracy of the vanished English yeoman has been restated for the agrarians of our own South. John Adams said that property is power. Thomas Jefferson based his democratic faith on the small farmer and feared the city proletariat. Distributionists insist that the great tradition of the Mississippi Valley is not the plantation aristocracy but the Jacksonian tradition of the small farmer.

The widest possible distribution of property would on the face of it be a desirable thing in more ways than one, not only as a guarantee of free government but as a promise of social peace. One problem for our modern society is to devise means of distributing property, including nonagricultural property. If, however, the problem eludes us we are not compelled to throw up our hands in despair. We may go back to the statement of the case by John Adams and re-examine its validity. Perhaps his maxim about property as the source of power goes too far. Perhaps Thomas Jefferson's fears are unjustified.

Distributionists as a rule mean by property landed property, the soil as the basis of a livelihood and therefore the guarantee of a man's independence. By that test it is a striking thought that at the outbreak of the World War the Russian peasants should have enjoyed greater freedom and exercised greater power than the people of the United States. In 1914 the peasants owned approximately eighty per cent of the Russian arable land, contrary to the widespread belief that at the outbreak of the 1917 Revolution the Russian peasants were landless and took the land for themselves. Here in the United States in 1930 out of a billion farm acres more than three hundred million acres were operated by tenants. Against eighty per cent of Russia's arable soil only seventy per cent of American farms were in the hands of farmer-owners. Even more formidable is the showing in terms of homeownership. The Russian peasant, constituting eighty per cent of the whole population, owned his hut, and many Russian townspeople owned their homes. Here in the United States in 1930 out of very nearly thirty million homes

the owners were only fourteen million. By the test of homeownership the Russian peasant should have been nearly twice as big a power under the Czars as the average American is today.

Great Britain, by this test of property, should be the most enslaved of all nations, as indeed G. K. Chesterton contended, but only a master of paradox would insist that the British masses have been less vocal and influential than the Russian masses under the Czars. France is the classic land of the peasant proprietor, and France was the home of true democracy to Mr Chesterton. But actually France stands against him because the property that is so widely distributed in that country is not exclusively landed property. France is not only the country of small landowners but also the land of small bond and shareowners. The French farmer is himself an investor; from his stocking hoard traditionally come the billions that finance French wars and indemnities. The whole French nation is thrifty. The so-called proletarians, in great numbers, have their savings, their investments. To be sure, that kind of property may be more easily lost than the farm on which the peasant faces good times and bad. Collapse and repudiation in Russia do not invalidate French farm ownership as they do destroy French bond ownership; but that is a difference in degree and not in kind. We are concerned with the general spirit of ownership rather than its concrete nature. It is largely romance that pictures the farmer defending his acres against the landlord and the tyrant and so keeping the democratic spirit alive. A man may fight for his personal property, for his life-insurance policy. He may fight for his town home as for his farm home. The essential thing is that he shall have something which he knows is his, which keeps him from destitution when his livelihood is interrupted. This ownership is the thing that makes a man and a democrat.

Property, then, as a pillar of democracy need not be farm property; it need not even be corporeal property of any kind. It may be only a lien, a right, a claim—what agrarian theorists mean when they say property is self-sufficiency. They think of the Jacksonian small farmer who could, if need be, cut himself off from his fellows, defy embargo and blockade, and grow his own food and spin his own clothes. This kind of independence the city dweller and wage worker obviously does not possess. But the question is how real is the small farmer's independence today? The advantages of Jacksonian yeoman autarchy today are hard to visualize under conditions other than those of civil war and social chaos. In the Russian civil war after 1917 the peasants were no doubt, for a little while, somewhat better off than the starving cities, but it was only on the brute level of a little more food in hand.

It was not a higher citizenship status. It is a case of one man seizing a life belt or a floating timber where the other man misses; it is not a distinction between freedom and subjection in a civilized society.

The democracy which G. K. Chesterton and his fellow Distributionists saw undermined in England and which he would restore by bringing back the old England of small rural holdings is not, in any event, the democracy which most men have in mind. The old yeoman democracy had passed from the stage before the Reform Bill, which would be just when English democracy, in the ordinary reading of history, made its entrance on the stage.

Democracy may rest on property in the narrow sense or on the property of rights, claims, easements. The familiar antithesis between property rights and human rights has been losing validity as human rights have taken on the character of property rights. Distributism may operate on a nation-wide scale without taking the form of a dissemination of physical property. The redistribution of wealth by the redistribution of income has made giant strides while Distributism remains the theory of a limited group. Social revolution by way of inheritance tax draws less attention than social revolutions more direct in approach but also more hypothetical. In the Summer of 1937 one of New York's leading bankers died and left an estate authoritatively estimated at eighty million dollars. Of this the Federal and state inheritance taxes were expected to take sixty million dollars. Six years earlier the decedent's father left an estate of seventy-three million dollars on which the taxes were thirteen million. After 1932 the inheritance taxes on eighty million dollars would have been thirty-five million. After 1934 they would have been forty-six million. In 1935 they went up to the aforesaid sixty million.

How far these theoretical imposts might be reduced, avoided, or, as President Roosevelt charged in many cases, evaded, does not concern the basic law which makes the state heir to three fourths of a rich man's estate. British inheritance taxes are in principle no less severe. They rise inversely to the inheritor's proximity of kinship, and it has actually come to pass that two deaths in fairly close succession, where a cousin inherited in each instance, absorbed the whole estate. In both countries, but over here more emphatically than in Great Britain, the doctrine of the stewardship of wealth, long antedating the new social philosophies and the new social fears, prepared the way for what may be called a general acquiescence in the sweeping nature of inheritance taxes. If a full generation ago Andrew Carnegie declared it a disgrace for a rich man to die rich, if the Rockefeller family distributed vast sums for the good of mankind, it is a logical step to transfer the stewardship of great

wealth from the individual owner to the Government, on the theory that Government is the better judge of how the money can most advantageously be employed. Criticism of the inheritance tax chiefly has to do with the methods of collection. Payment of the Government's share in a lump sum is possible only where the testator's fortune consists of readily negotiable securities. Where the greater part of an estate consists of real estate or business good will and future earnings, the payment of the Government's claims may compel liquidation under ruinous conditions and the displacement of thousands of wage and salary earners, though it is no doubt the duty and practice of wealthy men to build up cash reserves or insurance funds for inheritance taxes. Subject to the recognized practice that small estates shall be more leniently treated, there is no serious challenge of a principle which gives to the very rich man only a life tenure in the greater part of his estate. By the 1935 schedules an estate of one hundred thousand dollars paid in Federal tax approximately ten per cent; an estate of a million dollars paid twenty-two per cent; an estate of fifty million dollars paid thirty-two per cent; estates over that amount paid seventy per cent. In addition to this the state tax in New York might go as high as twenty per cent.

One might ask what part of the wealth which passes by inheritance is accounted for by huge estates and what part by moderately sized fortunes. Individually the latter do not bulk so large in the news, but in the aggregate they may be found to constitute a larger part of Wealth than the great accumulations and incomes which seize on the popular imagination. In the matter of income tax, for instance, we find that in the boom year 1928 the taxpayers with incomes between fifty thousand dollars and one hundred thousand dollars paid nearly eight hundred million dollars more in taxes than the owners of million-dollar incomes; there were more than twenty-seven thousand taxpayers of the former class against only five hundred and thirteen in the million-dollar class. Approximately forty thousand taxpayers with incomes between fifty thousand dollars and three hundred thousand dollars paid one and a half times as much as 3245 individuals above the three-hundred-thousand-dollar mark. As a social force it is not the dollar amounts alone that count, but also the number of individuals. Opposition to an increase in taxes in the class under three hundred thousand dollars will not be one and a half times as strong as among the taxpayers above that mark; it will be rather in proportion to the number of individual taxpayers, thirteen times as strong.

So with inheritance taxes. In 1931 there were transmitted 2212 estates between fifty thousand dollars and two hundred thousand dollars for

a total of five hundred and eighty-eight million dollars; 1261 estates between two hundred thousand dollars and six hundred thousand dollars for a total of seven hundred and forty-seven million; three hundred and eight estates between six hundred thousand and a million dollars for a total of three hundred and forty-nine million; three hundred and eighty-four estates of one to five million for a total of nine hundred and twenty-six million; forty-five estates of more than five million for a total of seven hundred and sixty-two million. Since a fortune of less than a million dollars, even in the temper of the year 1937, does not loom up in colossal form, it will be noted that approximately the same amount of wealth was transferred in estates between fifty thousand dollars and a million as in estates over that amount; but the number of individual estates was approximately thirty-eight hundred in the lower class and only three hundred and twenty-five in the class of a million dollars or more. Here again, as a practical problem in social dynamics, we must think not of wealth in bulk but of wealthy individuals. In that sense the "power" of wealth will be found to abide chiefly below the millionaire level.

The question whether the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer with the years was answered in the negative in 1922 by the Bureau of Economic Research studies under the direction of Professor Wilford I. King and again about 1928 in *Recent Economic Trends* and in 1930 by Professor King. A combined table would show the following distribution of the nation's income in percentages:

| | 1909 | 1913 | 1927-28 |
|----------------------|------|------|---------|
| Wages and Salaries | 53 | 53 | 59 |
| Property and Profits | 47 | 47 | 41 |

Professor King found that the top five per cent of income receivers got thirty-three per cent of the total income in 1913 and twenty-four per cent in 1920.

What happened to wealth and labor after the collapse of 1929 we may roughly estimate from the income-tax returns. In 1934 the national income was down to sixty-two per cent of what it was in 1928, but the income of all individuals making income-tax returns was down to fifty-one per cent of their 1928 income. The aggregate income of individuals with an income of fifty thousand dollars or more was down to fifteen per cent of the 1928 figure. At the beginning of the second Roosevelt administration it is probable that wages, salaries and relief payments took close to two thirds of the national income. This means that since 1913 there was an improvement of nearly one fourth in the

status of labor, and a decline of nearly three tenths in the status of property and profits.

Thus we see the business depression accelerating a long-term trend. Depression phenomena by themselves provide no sound basis for judgment. In 1928 the taxpayers with incomes of fifty thousand dollars and over had seven or eight per cent of the national income and in 1934 they had less than two per cent. What shall we use as our base line for normalcy, the boom year or the depression year? If the normal condition of man is boom, as in 1928, then the wealthy classes in the depression suffered far beyond their deserts. If we argue, and it has been so maintained in certain quarters, that the 1934 distribution of the national income is the juster ratio, then the owners of fifty-thousand-dollar incomes had much more than their fair share in 1928. Between boom and depression we might take a "normal" year, 1925, for our base. It would then appear that in a depression year like 1934 the country as a whole is sixty per cent of normal, the wage and salary earners are sixty-seven per cent of normal, and the holders of fifty-thousand-dollar incomes are forty per cent of normal. It is another way of saying that property rights in the United States have been yielding ground to human rights in the long account, and that the process takes on new speed in a national emergency.

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We have been examining the thesis that democracy to endure must rest on a foundation of small property owners and, in particular, small farmers; and we have seen reason to discount the menace of proletarianization in the United States. A problem and a menace far less abstruse and far more familiar in the discussion of American democracy is the question of political corruption. In the national record free government and clean government have been far from synonymous; and it has been a favorite subject of speculation how soon misgovernment in the United States might be expected to undermine free government. A well-known phrase from the early years of the century describes a great American city as corrupt and contented. How does it stand today with corruption and contentment in American democracy?

It has never been a simple question. The perplexities were plainly there as late as Independence Day of 1937 when Robert F. Wagner, United States Senator from New York, delivered an address at Tammany Hall, in which he stressed Tammany's services to liberty and progress and declared that Tammany might justly claim to be the

cradle of modern liberalism in the United States. Senator Wagner was proud to have been one of a little band of Tammany legislators at Albany, who in the years before the World War inaugurated a broad program of social legislation. This movement flowered in the four administrations of Governor Alfred E. Smith between 1918 and 1928, continued under his successor Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt, and by the latter was carried into the national sphere after 1932 under the name of the New Deal. Senator Wagner's ardent tribute to Tammany Hall was made in anticipation of the municipal campaign of the following November, in which Tammany suffered a disastrous rout on the issue of good government. This does not mean that Senator Wagner's apologia for Tammany Hall deserves to be forgotten.

If ever there was a time for democracy to have a proper conceit of itself it is today when against it are arrayed the physical and spiritual brutalities of the reign of force in totalitarian Europe. At no time has democracy been more than a fair approximation to its ideal, like every other human institution; and it has at all times been easy for the critic of democracy to contrast our Fourth-of-July orators with our slave auctions in Martin Chuzzlewit's days, with our gangster-politicians today. Democratic institutions are operated by human beings. If we scan the democratic record from its beginnings in old Greece we find that in Athens democracy rested on a broad base of slavery. Freedom in the medieval Italian cities was compatible with violence and a venal patriotism. England, today with ourselves and France the bulwark of democracy, has its great antidemocratic proviso of caste. France has running through the whole pattern of its life a chronic feud between the bourgeoisie and the "people"—that is to say, the workers. We at home have the striking exceptions and shortcomings which are a large part of the subject matter of this book.

Let it be admitted, but also let the implications be recognized, that democracy can exist side by side with some very startling exceptions. Where was Jeffersonian and Jacksonian democracy strongest? In the South where slavery flourished. Where, on the other hand, was anti-slavery sentiment most powerful? In the Federalist-Tory New England. Democracy in the course of its long record has been consistent with slavery and imperialism in ancient Greece, with capitalism and imperialism in Great Britain, with capitalism, lawlessness and political corruption in the United States. And yet, by and large, we know that in these imperfect democratic societies free men have voted and opposed and spoken and written what they thought. Where such liberties exist in quantity is democracy.

A bishop of the Church of England said, in opposing certain temperance legislation, that he would rather see England drunk and free than sober and regimented. If liberty is the boon that free men and free peoples believe it to be, one should rather have a people free and often misgoverned than honestly ruled and enslaved. It is an argument that would be sustained up to the hilt by the newer ethics with its stress on the supreme value of experience, its rejection of what old-fashioned times used to call Sin. For that matter it was not a modern moralist but the author of *Paradise Lost* who scorned a life of fugitive and cloistered virtue.

The mischief of misgovernment in a democracy is in good measure repaired by the fact that all men are free to misgovern; that both sides can rig the election. If the Democrats could fix elections in the South or in Kansas City so could the Republicans in Pennsylvania. It is a fair rule that works both ways; and the frustration of the popular will through stuffing the ballot box, though a crime in the single instance, cancels out in the long-time account of democratic procedure. It is a rough game, but still it is a game, with two sides participating and innings for both in the longer test. Under democratic misgovernment popular uprisings will often wrest a community from the grasp of a corrupt boss, or on a lower level a Democratic coup may oust a Republican boss or a Republican upsurge capture a Democratic stronghold. Our corruption has about it a certain camaraderie—it is the natural lawlessness of the people applied to politics. It is an expression of pioneer morals rather than the civilized corruption of the British parliamentary system before 1832 or the terrorist-corruption of the new authoritarian regimes. There—in Germany, in Italy and in Soviet Russia—there is only one side to the game and there are no opponents: there are only enemies to be harried and uprooted.

The world background against which the debate between free government and its rival systems used to be conducted has changed, and the democratic system that we were once at liberty to discuss in an academic security is now challenged by foes from without and doubters from within. Up to the World War autocracy stood on the defensive, and the future belonged to the free peoples. It was a situation in which democracy could afford to confess its sins in public as part of the process of repentance and amendment. Today the democratic ideal is under heavy fire from the despotisms of the Right and of the Left, and it behooves us not to confess too many faults lest it give aid and comfort to the enemy. It will never cease to be our duty and our basic self-interest to keep the public life as clean as may be, but tactics change with

the occasion. In quieter, securer times it was permissible to rally public opinion for good government and against machine rule by laying on the dark colors; reform movements, being human, will not take time to give the boss his due. The higher expediency now dictates a calmer view of democratic shortcomings. We need not go so far as to say in every instance that they are the price we must pay for liberty, but we might remember to call them faults and not cancers. We must not be too impatient. National Socialism in Germany has been known to mention a period of five hundred years for the completion of its self-allotted task. Russian Sovietism has not asked for quite so much time but does speak in generations. It behooves democracy to have a proper conceit of itself.

And after all this is only to set down in words what we have practiced. We have seen Tammany misrule compatible with a not unimpressive record of social and humanitarian reform. President Roosevelt's New Deal was backed by huge pluralities from the political machines in Chicago, Kansas City, Jersey City, New York. It does not affect our main argument that the bosses rallied to Mr Roosevelt from necessity rather than choice. That they should have been compelled to bow to a superior democratic force is what counts. The machine politicians placed their fine technical equipment at the service of a bold program of social reform.

American democracy in the face of new world conditions will be more tolerant of its politicians and likewise of its businessmen. The distinguished author of *Main Street* and *Babbitt*, speculating on the possibilities of Fascism coming to America, found himself driven to the conclusion that the national fiber has been destroyed by the nation's salesmen. Against this it may be asserted that Babbitt is one of our strongest hopes in fighting the dictatorship idea. The psychology of the salesman is hostile to the very nature of force. Dictatorship imposes where the salesman must persuade. The salesman may cajole, inveigle and in extreme cases misrepresent and deceive, but in the last resort he must persuade his customer to buy; he cannot push merchandise down his throat by force. The proclamation of Cheese Week by twenty-eight state governors is an example of the high-pressure salesman civilization that the author of *Babbitt* deplors. But it is far better to be high-pressured by a high-pressure salesman than to be suppressed and dehumanized by a dictator. American salesmanship makes use of Cheese Weeks to sell cheese, of Apple Weeks to sell apples, of Father's Day to sell neckties and of Mother's Day to sell flowers; but it is, after all, persuasion. In the police regimes of Europe it is a literal fact that the people must eat cheese or abstain from cheese—or meat, or wheat,

or butter—according to orders from above. American salesmanship has endowed us with Dairy Queens and Apple Queens and Citrus Queens; but it is better to be ruled by a Dairy Queen than by a Duce, by a Fruit Queen than by a Führer, by a Potato Queen than by a Politburo. Our salesmen pay a man the human compliment of trying to win his consent; he is a customer, not a clod or a conscript.

Babbitt sums up the whole argument. It is well enough in the quiet, Arcadian days of 1922 to show up Babbitt for the purpose of shaming him into taking steps for his own spiritual amendment. But today Babbitt is an angel of culture by comparison with the bitter fanatics who have set their iron heel on the free human soul, who have harnessed learning and art and thought to the program of a political party. It is not in Zenith, U.S.A., that the new barbarian threat to the heritage of civilization has arisen. This is aside from Babbitt's kindliness and fraternity, as set against the proscriptions and the massacres by which the new despots rule. And that is what we mean by the complete change of world background. Babbitt against his original background of 1922 is a pathetic figure. Babbitt fifteen years later is a man to cherish.

CHAPTER XXIII

Nations

AMERICAN CONSTANTS are the basic elements that make up the American Idea. The life of nations is shaped by the national genius and not by a universal materialistic determinism. Precisely because the substratum of life is everywhere the same, precisely because the primary urge in all mankind is food and growth and sex, these things do not shape life. They are only the raw substance of life and they are only the raw substance of every national history. It is the Idea that imposes form and feature on the mass. It is the Idea that produces the combinations known as Greek history and Roman history and English history and American history out of the same ultimate factors.

Here lies the error to which so much of our so-called New History succumbs in its eagerness to get away from kings and battles and births and deaths and to reach down to the fundamentals of civilization. In the new conception Egypt is not entirely or even primarily Pyramids and crocodile worship. Greece is not primarily Pericles and the Parthenon. Rome was not, as we were once taught, a nation of thickset muscular figures and strong chins, wrapped in togas and addicted to conquest, gladiatorial combats and road building. France is not primarily Joan of Arc at the stake and Louis XVI on the scaffold. The United States is not primarily Bunker Hill, the Declaration of Independence and Gettysburg. No, says the New History. The real history of Egypt is the story of a peasant people fed by the inundations of the Nile and exploited by priesthood and monarchy. The real history of Greece is the story of a peasant and industrial population exploited by a merchant aristocracy. The real history of Rome is the story of a peasant and urban working

class exploited by a land-owning and banker class. The real history of France is the story of a peasant and urban population exploited by an absolute monarchy after it had been exploited by a feudal aristocracy and going on to be exploited by a plutocratic bourgeoisie. The history of the United States is the story of a struggle waged by an agricultural and industrial working class against domination by Business.

Now it is unquestionably true that the history of every nation is a story of climate, soil, class oppression, land monopoly, debased coinage and a falling birth rate. These things sum up the basic physiological structure of all nations. As the portraits of individual nations they are a sad failure. We get no very adequate portrait of Abraham Lincoln, of Thomas Jefferson or of Jesse James by confining ourselves in all three men to a statement of the number of arms and legs and the main outlines of the circulatory and digestive systems. All that would be missing would be the form, the features and the personality.

The schoolboy brought up on the old history was trained to think of Greece as Thermopylae and the Parthenon, and of France as Joan of Arc and Napoleon, and the schoolboy was thus in a position to distinguish between ancient Greece and modern France. Youth trained in the New History which rejects dates and minimizes names and places and concentrates on trends and forces cannot help thinking, and is in fact encouraged to think, that every country is like every other country. Such a young student of history is in danger of picturing Joan of Arc at the head of the Carthaginian elephants holding the pass of Thermopylae against the forces of Cortez on their retreat from Moscow; though possibly the young man has been safeguarded against every chance of confusion by not being introduced to Leonidas, Hannibal, Joan, Cortez and Napoleon. The young man has not been studying the history of nations but the history of mankind in a series of monotonous and undifferentiated chapters. He has moved through a recurrent rhythm or drone or blur of climates, soils, social classes, depreciated currencies and falling birth rates. It is a better history of mankind than the older national kind, but in all consistency we cannot call it a history of Egypt, Greece, Rome, France and the United States. It is not painting a portrait. It is drawing isotherms and annual rainfalls.

The pull of nationhood is stronger than the ties of religion. The forward sweep of nationalism began, of course, long before the World War. Nationalism was the principal force behind the war. We only lose ourselves in ultimate causes when we interpret the great tragedy in terms of Big Powers, the German challenge to British trade supremacy, Franco-Russian fear of the German advance in Central Europe, growing arma-

ments and rival alliances. After all, the spark that set the world on fire leaped forth in the Balkans—and for many years the spark had been waiting to be struck there in the Balkans, where the last vestiges of the Turk in Europe were disappearing and the young Slav nationalities were entering on the path which the larger nations had followed before them: to independence, unification and expansion.

The emergence of new nations out of the agonies of the World War is something that the American people chose to forget in the sharp reaction from the bitter costs of the war. We went so far as to scoff at the free nations in whose behalf Woodrow Wilson had rallied this country to the cause of the self-determination of peoples. A restored Poland, a restored Bohemia, Serbia and Rumania enlarged by the return of nationals who had been under Hapsburg rule—here were nearly seventy-five million people reunited to their brethren. It was three times the population of the Italy whose rebirth in the middle of the nineteenth century so stirred the hearts of plain people and poets alike; it was almost twice the population of the reunited Germany of 1870. But in the world's post-Armistice disillusion these vast redeemed European masses ceased to be self-determined peoples and became Balkanized Europe. The spectacle of these erstwhile victims of oppression immediately surrendering to their own nationalist passions and becoming oppressors in turn contributed heavily to American disenchantment.

American opinion for nearly two decades after the Armistice continued to frown on nationalism without being always careful to distinguish between its starkest form—in Italy, in Germany, in Japan—and the nationalism that continued to operate in the rest of the world, among the nonaggressive nations as well as among the nations on the march. It has been a nationalist era. Nationalism triumphed in Great Britain in 1931, when in the depth of the economic crisis Ramsay MacDonald, cofounder of the Labor party and twice its Prime Minister, did not hesitate to break with his party and his past and set up a Nationalist government resting on Conservative support. Mr MacDonald was formally anathematized by the Labor party, but in practice the Labor Opposition ceased to oppose, and thus actually subscribed to the MacDonald policies. Great Britain in those years offers us a striking example of the conflict between formula and feeling in the democratic nations. The British people staged a great League of Nations plebiscite, and the Oxford Union adopted a resolution pledging its members not to fight for King or Country; but Lord Robert Cecil, who led the great League of Nations plebiscite, would not hear of giving the colonies back to Germany; the Labor Opposition supported rearmament; and in the crisis precipitated by the abdication of Edward

VIII in December 1936 the nation stood united, Labor with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Nationalism in the sense of a healthy patriotism was the dominant note of the period in France. A story is told of a militant French Socialist at an international party conference before the World War. He was a Socialist, he said, but when *la patrie* was invaded he was first a Frenchman. After a quarter of a century almost the very same words were uttered by Léon Jouhaux, head of the General Confederation of Labor, in a labor crisis in the early months of 1938. He would go forward with a general strike until *la patrie* was in danger. In the intervening twenty-five years the spirit of French national unity met the test of a succession of crises—the inflation crisis under Raymond Poincaré, the Fascist street demonstrations and gunfire in February 1934 under Daladier, the economic and fiscal difficulties attendant upon the New Deal of 1936 under Léon Blum, the tensions created by the civil war in Spain from 1936 to 1939. In every instance party spirit yielded to the national interests. Twenty years after the Armistice it was plain that even the French Communists were good Frenchmen.

The most convincing demonstration of the power of nationalism during this period would be found in Soviet Russia. In that country there has been in power since 1917 a regime whose formal creed is the denial of nationalism. Bolshevism puts class above country. The Bolshevik revolution of 1917 was intended to usher in world revolution. Actually we have seen the Stalinist doctrine of Socialism in One Country—a doctrine of expediency—evolving into the doctrine of the Socialist Fatherland, and a family reconciliation between this Socialist Fatherland and the historic Russian fatherland. The earlier Soviet school textbooks were rewritten. Instead of an unbroken night of Russian history preceding the Bolshevik revolution, the Soviet regime discovered that Russia's past has had its great moments in which the foundations were laid for the Soviet experiment. The predatory Czars now receive credit for having built up a Russia with sufficient elbow room for a full-sized Socialist state. The earlier Bolshevik reaction from Russia's classic writers towards a proletarian modernist literature was checked and thrown into reverse. In 1937 the centennial of Alexander Pushkin as Russia's national poet was observed on a grand scale.

The realities of Soviet nationalism came to the fore in the course of the long succession of drastic "purges" in the ranks of Joseph Stalin's opponents which began in 1936 and swept out of existence the Old Bolshevik builders of the Soviet regime. The hand of Moscow came down heavily on the heads of the constituent republics and nationalities in the theoretic-

cally voluntary political association known as the Soviet Union. The right to secede from the Soviet Union had been recognized in the new Soviet Constitution, but it was only one of the many ironies in that document. Only once has a member nation of the Soviet Union made an attempt at secession; that was early in the history of the Soviet regime, and it happened in Joseph Stalin's own Georgia. The movement was drowned out in blood.

The myth of independent Soviet nationalities was completely exposed when the Stalin purge found it necessary to sweep away the entire governmental machinery of the member republics—in White Russia at the extreme European end of the Soviet Union fronting on Poland, in Tadjikistan at the other end on the heights of the Pamirs looking down into India, and in between in the Ukraine, the second largest republic in the Soviet Union. Over the extent of eight million square miles the winnowing fan swept out prime ministers, cabinets, secretaries of the Communist party and of other party organizations. The same infection had apparently entered the veins of the Jewish population in White Russia, the Kirghiz of the Central Asia steppes, the Little Russian millions on the Don and the Armenians in Transcaucasia. The real answer would be that the Soviet Union is, nationally, the old empire of the Czars minus the territories lost after the World War.

Events, then, have given the lie to the traditional Socialist contention that when the classes have been abolished the nations will disappear. The workers of all nations are not responding to the Marxian trumpet call which the Soviet Government prints on its festal banners. The workers of the world are not uniting because they have nothing to lose but their chains. The workers, including Russia, feel that they have something else but their chains to lose—they have their country and the natal soil to lose. No doubt the great forward sweep of the Industrial Revolution goes on and life shows the effects in every part of the globe, but the nations respond to industrialism after their separate fashion. The growth of industry and urbanism, for instance, will bring certain effects everywhere. It will bring congestion and centralization, restlessness, a weakened sense of home and neighborhood, a passion for social amusements rather than individual recreation, relaxed family ties, women in industry, birth control. Yet each nation will remain itself under new conditions.

The factory worker in Birmingham, England, in Lille, France, in Pittsburgh, U.S.A., and in Moscow, U.S.S.R., will be much closer in temper, in tastes, in habits of mind, to his preindustrial ancestor of two hundred years ago than he will be to his own contemporary in the other countries. Over long periods of time they may draw nearer to each other, but

British labor of the deeply religious Lansbury type is ever so much closer to the England of John Wesley than it is to French labor of today or Russian labor of today. The gradualism of English labor is the gradualism of all Englishmen. The domestic habits of the French worker are those of his bourgeois countryman. How thoroughly German is the German worker is written in recent history. Of labor in our own country there is no need to speak. The middle-class mentality of the American workingman is a source of mingled perplexity and grief in Left circles. And yet the national genius is fully recognized on the Left when the argument is advanced that Bolshevism in other countries need not follow the Russian example; that Spain would have a Spanish type of proletarianism, and France, if she made the plunge into collectivism, would do it in the French way.

Nationalism is a fact and a force which we must not be driven into minimizing by the excesses of postwar nationalists and racialists. The totalitarian fanatics of Central Europe have made out of race purity a scientific fraud and the basis for a brutal statecraft, but we must not be led into denying the general complex of kinships and ties that makes nations. It may be scoring a point against racialism to point out that the greatest poet of the German people, Goethe, was not a dolichocephalic blond, and that Adolf Hitler himself is a swarthy Alpine. It certainly is destructive of the race thesis that the people of Great Britain today are a mixture of many strains, and that such a mixture obviously is not inimical to national greatness. On the other hand it is going too far to insist that there is no such thing, broadly speaking, as an English type, counting body and spirit. There is an English type that is easily enough recognizable, despite striking exceptions. It has been pointed out that Lord Nelson, who said on his deathbed to his captain, "Kiss me, Hardy," is scarcely the typical English father who finds it hard to be articulate with the son who is going back to the trenches in Flanders. That solid oak, Marshal Joffre, would hardly be called the typical effervescent Frenchman; he was so plainly the same type as his opponent Field Marshal Hindenburg. Yet it is a mistake to press these racial paradoxes beyond their proper value as exceptions that test the rule. A biological sport like Nelson or Shelley in England only calls attention to an existing English norm. It is a question of majority truth, and it is true that a majority of Englishmen and Germans are fair skinned and a majority of Frenchmen are dark. It is a position especially hard to reject in our new scientific world, from which absolute truth has been eliminated and where only statistical probability exists. By the new relativist thinking the dance of the electrons that turns water into ice may bring it about that

heat shall produce ice and that cold shall melt it; but the chances are all against such startling reversals. Statistically we know pretty well what an Englishman or a Frenchman or a Russian will look like. The little boy said that our first father Adam gave the name Elephant to the elephant because it looked like an elephant. There is a good deal of practical truth in the theory. One can say beforehand that an Englishman is very likely to look and behave like an Englishman, and a Frenchman like a Frenchman. One can say with certainty that a group of a hundred Englishmen will look very English and a group of a hundred Russians will behave startlingly like Russians.

We stress this commonplace because it is so often a forgotten commonplace and because of its importance to a clear vision of the world about us. There is such a thing as blinking everyday facts and surrendering ourselves to a world of clashing fanaticisms. In a world where the doctrinaire has run mad it behooves us more than ever to assert the claims of common experience. One such great datum of experience is that different nations exist.

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CHAPTER XXIV

The American Temper

NOTHING IN NATURE, including the practical aspects of human nature, was alien to the mind of Benjamin Franklin. The outstanding trait in his many-sided character was a voracious curiosity, the passion for asking questions of the world around us which is the foundation of science. And yet, within hailing distance of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Benjamin Franklin, his countrymen are just beginning to be educated to a belief in pure science—that is to say, in disinterested curiosity. The heads of great industries join with college presidents to wean the American people away from a native distrust in the kind of scientific curiosity that is not directed to a specific purpose.

Benjamin Franklin was not a pure scientist, though in isolated instances his was the roving curiosity of the scientist and the eighteenth-century amateur. The earliest of our great Americans was a man of the world, and the human mind to him was the servant of utility. Over a period of nearly two centuries and a half from Benjamin Franklin to John Dewey our American thinking has been the instrumentalist thinking. The native habit of mind is cool to abstract ideas, even if it is the idea of Truth as an object in itself. Only man is an object in himself and Truth is the instrument that contributes to his well-being. Truth is that which has human value. Moving back in time from our own day, this American constant in the mental life is popularized as Pragmatism around the turn of the century by William James, who got the name and the thing itself twenty-five years earlier from Charles Sanders Peirce. In the year 1878, when Peirce first set forth the principles of Pragmatism in print, there appeared two new lectures from the pen of Ralph Waldo Emerson, who still had four years to live.

At first thought the Transcendentalism of Emerson and of New Eng-

land's golden age would be the complete antithesis to a philosophy that called itself by such a name as instrumentalism. The Emersonian idealism, the austere heights where a man's soul dwelt with itself and its God, the contempt for worldly success—Emerson, Thoreau, Bronson Alcott—are the denial of a Pragmatism which asserts that only the useful is true and good. Actually this is a popular conception of Transcendentalism that will not fit the facts in the case, even when we admit that the Transcendentalist movement was a loose and far-flung aggregation of many diverse things, sometimes contradictory. In essence and practice Transcendentalism was by no means removed from the practical life. It was passionately concerned with problems of social regeneration and social reform. Transcendentalists were in the front rank of educational reformers, of temperance workers, of so nonacademic a cause as antislavery.

We may close up the gap from the other side by noting that another definition for Pragmatism or Instrumentalism is Humanism. Emerson was primarily concerned with human values and not with ideas. He was not the philosopher but the prophet and teacher. He was not a pure scientist but an applied scientist. His interest lay in lifting the commodity called Man to the highest pitch of his capacities. Emerson came closest to the hearts of his countrymen when he taught that Man has the making of his own destiny in his hands. And that sums up the instrumentalist frame of thought which is the American mind.

We have spoken elsewhere of the basic American reverence for a man's job. It is another way of saying that man is an object in himself. The man engaged in holding down a job is doing something with himself, if only on the lowest level of keeping himself alive. Our extraordinary tolerance for the man engaged in making a living, which may extend as far as the gunman and the crooked politician, represents a perverted form of our traditional humanism. It is the sacrifice of absolute standards to the higher claims of man experimenting with values.

The satirists, from this point of view, have been perhaps too impatient with the popular slogan of Service in mouths often suspect. The fact that Service has been employed as a disguise for rapacity and greed and ordinary self-seeking does not preclude Service from being the statement of a fundamental American creed. To serve is to be instrumental, to be practical, to possess life value. Professor John Dewey and the speaker at the weekly luncheon of the local board of trade both stem from the author of *Poor Richard's Almanac* through a line of descent which includes Ralph Waldo Emerson. The type of success contemplated in the maxims of Poor Richard is not the kind of success upheld in the essay on Self-Reliance, but the two texts have in common the

belief in man as the architect of his own fortunes. Poor Richard and Emerson join to write our books on self-help, which at all times command a large public and which, from time to time, rise to tidal-wave dimensions. They are the books which teach the reader how to achieve health, wealth, friends, happiness, equanimity and leadership by power of will reinforced by special exercises, physical and spiritual. It is very probable that hard times like those which descended on the nation in 1930 only stimulate the demand for such books. In such times men and women rejoice to be told that they can begin to build a new life in middle age, that they can surmount loneliness, that they can conquer diffidence and become leaders of men.

Essentially this is Emerson's self-reliance. It does not matter that Emerson despised the "maxims of a low prudence" and that he preached the intense inner life which gives no heed to the world's opinion. We know how often an idea or a doctrine will be turned against the purpose of the author, just as mechanical inventions designed to serve humanity may become engines of war. Emerson's insistence on the self as a good in itself may lead easily to the cultivation of self as a powerful tool. Self-reliance in the sense of being true to one's self may easily become self-reliance in pursuit of aims of low prudence. Van Wyck Brooks, in *The Flowering of New England*, says of his hero:

Emerson was proclaiming the doctrine . . . that the innermost nature of things is congenial to the powers that men possess. That everything that ever was or will be, as he said in his essay "Self-Reliance," is here in the enveloping now, that he who obeys himself is a part of fate . . . this challenged the natural faculties of his hearers. It stirred them to take life striving in full belief that what man had done man could do, that the world was all opportunities, strings of tension waiting to be struck.

Self-reliance thus glides imperceptibly into self-help, and Transcendentalism becomes an attunement to the universe that does not exclude material success, even as Emerson's fondness for the lore of the Far East is ancestral to the many schools of Oriental "philosophy" that so frequently go hand in hand with the conquest of health and wealth through power of the will. Emerson wanted to sacrifice ease and prosperity and rise above private considerations to "breathing and living on public and illustrious thoughts." But his technique might lend itself to other uses.

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Emerson carried an American gospel to the people in an American way, by the lecture platform. More than half a century after his death

we are still the greatest lecture-going people in the world. The foreigners began coming before Thackeray and Dickens. In the 1860s the lyceum was the equivalent of theater, motion picture and concert, and the habit has not been injured by motion picture, automobile and radio. The lecture managers say that audiences are chiefly attracted by names. A celebrity is worth ten times as much as an expert. One reason for lecture-going is said to be America's lack of royalty; it is the desire to look upon and mingle with the great.

No doubt the lecture managers know their business. Yet the heart of the matter is democracy superimposed on a pioneer civilization. The lecture habit is in part the town-meeting habit. It is in large measure the product of a period of revolutionary agitation after 1770, followed by the electioneering of a political system after 1789. We are as a people interested in issues and problems. Complaint has been made of the Messianic complex in the American temper; for good or ill, the urge to help and save our fellow man involves arguing, exhorting, lecturing. Zeal for debate, for instruction, for issues and messages, goes with a national habit of seeking enlightenment through personal contacts. We are not a reading people by the test of the annual consumption of books. Our newspaper showing is better, but in the very newspapers is proof that we prefer to get our information by word of mouth. We call it the interview. Actually the news interview is most of the time a poor source of information. The distinguished person interviewed is on parade, or on his guard, or merely ill informed; but for the newspaper there is simply no comparison between a piece of information from a well-known public figure and a much better piece of information from a document or a well-informed reporter speaking in his own person. It is the prestige of the man on the spot.

The national taste slants away from the bookworm life and to the active outdoors; that is another reason why people go to lectures. They go to listen to men who have done things or men who have attracted attention, which means the same thing. The author of a well-liked book cannot answer the questions we put to him as we turn his pages. He can answer a question from the lecture platform. Probably his book speaks better for him than his hurried answer from the stage, but it is not the answer that counts; it is the contact.

That is why we are the El Dorado for lecturers from all over the world who can make themselves understood, but in the year 1937 we published only eleven thousand book titles against seventeen thousand in Great Britain, and our per capita consumption of newspapers would be not much more than half of Great Britain's. The fondness for listening to

lectures is largely a fondness for meeting lecturers. It is a habit rooted in pioneer existence when life was lonely and the arrival of a distinguished stranger was an event.

3

H. L. Mencken stresses in *The American Language* our standardized idiom:

That vast uniformity which marks the people of the United States, in political doctrine, in social habit, in general information, in reaction to ideas, in prejudices and enthusiasms, in the veriest details of domestic custom and dress, is nowhere more marked in truth than in their speech habits.

And in another place Mr Mencken cites the prediction of Noah Webster that in a hundred years the English language of the United States and that of the British Isles would be as far apart as Dutch is from German or Danish from Swedish. A century might bring two different tongues and certainly two different dialects.

We may pause to smile over one more prophecy shipwrecked on the coast of history, and then take note of the two primary facts set down or implied in the preceding lines: (1) the extraordinary uniformity of the English language as spoken in the United States, and (2) the remarkable fact that this uniform American speech has departed so little from the English that is spoken and written in its original home in the British Isles.

In defense of Noah Webster's sadly frustrated prophecy it has been argued that he did not foresee the great sweep of modern invention. Science has spanned the oceans and neutralized the centrifugal forces that would otherwise have carried the spoken language of London and the spoken language of Washington, D. C., out of recognizable touch. It is the defense which Mr Mencken offers for Noah Webster. How could the eminent lexicographer have foreseen five-day ships between New York and Southampton, the Atlantic cable, the wireless, the talking films? But it is not a convincing excuse, in this instance as in other instances of mistaken augury. It is no excuse for a prophet to say that he could not foresee the unexpected, since that is what prophets are for.

Noah Webster's error is all the more striking because the unforeseen developments in his case were by no means all of them hostile to his forecast. He did not foresee the bridging of the Atlantic by modern science bringing closer speech ties between the two English-speaking nations. On the other hand he did not foresee a force working in the opposite direction, and that was the beginning of a vast inpour of non-

English peoples into the United States. When Noah Webster died in 1843 the tide of immigration that was to last nearly a century was just setting in. Even then the newcomers were from an English-speaking country—from that most distressful country, famine-stricken Ireland. A few years after Noah Webster's death the German invasion began. They were the refugee Forty-Eighters who fought for democracy in Germany and were defeated. For forty years the German immigration continued in full force. It slackened about the year 1890, giving way to the great flood of immigration from Eastern and Central Europe which was brought to a close only in the year 1924 by our new policy of drastic restriction. What would Noah Webster have said if it had been given to him to foresee that within seventy-five years after his death the United States would receive something like twenty-three million European immigrants from the Continent against seven million people from the British Isles? What would he have said if he had been told that in the year 1930 there would be nearly thirty million Americans who themselves or whose parents had for their mother tongue another language than English? If we carry the reckoning beyond the second immigrant generation, as we may for the purposes of the present argument, nearly one third of the white population of the United States traces back to non-English origins. Noah Webster would obviously have regarded his prophecy as more than assured, and in fact as speeded up in time. With every third American a stranger to the English tradition in whole or in part, what question could there be but that the English language of the United States and that of the British Isles would soon part company? To the influence of time and separation he would now have added the Germanic linguistic influence, the Latin influence, the Slavic influence. He would have deduced an English language more radically affected by foreign influences than the English tongue has been influenced since the invasion of England by the Normans in 1066.

What has actually happened we know. The two English-speaking nations, the United States and the British Commonwealth, are practically as close together in their written and spoken language as they were in the time of Samuel Adams and Edmund Burke. There is, of course, no such thing as the American Language. We cannot build up a separate American tongue on a special vocabulary of a few hundred words; to this the radical differences of American and British usage apparently resolve themselves. It is a familiar list but not a convincing list. America may choose to go her own way in the matter of using suspenders where the English use braces, elevator for lift, cracker for biscuit, ticket seller for booking clerk, shoes for boots, baggage for luggage and being sick

instead of being ill. This list would still leave something like four hundred thousand words which Americans and British hold in common. Actually, as we know, Mr Mencken builds his separate American language on quite a different foundation. He sees on the one hand the formal English language of American newspapers and books and educated usage and on the other hand the American language spoken by plain American people in the factories and garages, on the farms—and on the vaudeville stage. It is the old argument between the “living” language of the people and the polite language of the drawing room, the colleges and the printed page. But this distinction is not really relevant to the subject of a separate American language. By this test there would be not only an American language spoken by the plain people of the United States, but a cockney language spoken in London, a Somerset language spoken by the plain yeomen of Southwest England, a Lancashire language spoken in Manchester and Birmingham, and any number of other British languages differing perceptibly from the language in which the editorials of the London *Times* are written. Actually we know that American college students, cattle tenders, vaudeville actors, expert accountants and archeologists have no difficulty in understanding each other, and when they go to England they encounter not the slightest difficulty in making themselves understood. British businessmen, lecturers, actors, jockeys, butlers and Oxford tutors come to the United States and are not seriously handicapped in making a living by ignorance of the language of the country. We are speaking here, of course, of an American Language. There exists a sufficiently large body of Americanisms to receive the separate attention of the makers of the great Oxford Dictionary. In the everyday use of the everyday American such Americanisms do not bulk large.

The uniformity of American speech habits is part, as Mr Mencken notes, of a general uniformity of life. Local language differences were at no time important, and such as arose from time to time and from place to place have been worn smooth by the forward and backward flow of a fluid population over the surface of a freshly occupied continent. As people from New England moved towards the setting sun in the Western Reserve, and then in Kansas, and then in Oregon; or as Virginia moved into Kentucky and southern Illinois and Missouri and so into Texas and beyond the Rocky Mountains, they carried their speech with them into empty country where it had no rival vocabularies to contend with. This blank lingual page differs obviously from the conquests of the Old World, where an invading language found a native vernacular with which to compete, compromise and ultimately merge into a new tongue.

There was no more reason why the English language brought into Oregon after 1830 should undergo any striking change under local influences than the English language brought into Massachusetts in 1620. Such local speech peculiarities as might be expected to arise even in a virgin country with the lapse of time would tend to be ironed out by the mobility of American life. Old World provincial dialects have had their being in a self-contained and stable rural civilization where one generation succeeds another in field and homestead through the centuries. This condition has not prevailed in the United States. The South as a whole, where the rhythm of American life has been slowest, shows the greatest language peculiarities. Even for the South comparison is only with other parts of the United States. It is mobility itself compared with the rhythm of European life. After all, it was in the Southland that Daniel Boone began as a pioneer in North Carolina and died a pioneer in Missouri, a frontier pushed forward a thousand miles in a single lifetime. The swift shuttle of American life was bound to weave uniformity, in speech as in other practices. The process must be enormously accelerated in the twentieth century by the radio and the talking films. They bring the vocabulary and the accents of Hollywood, or Washington, D. C., or Harvard University into every household in the land.

Another factor contributing to the uniformity of American speech is to be found in the exceptionally important role which book teaching and book learning have played in the history of American popular education. The greatest educator in American history has been McGuffey, author of the *Readers*; but even McGuffey, with an aggregate circulation reaching close to one hundred million copies, is only a part of the textbook instruction which has ruled in America as against the oral pedagogy on which the English pride themselves. It is their habit to assume that in America we teach things which in England people just absorb. English schools do not teach English history as our schools teach American history, nor do they teach "English" as we teach the English language and literature with anything like the same emphasis. English children are traditionally supposed to pick up their English history, their language, their loyalty, by simply breathing the air of England. As a matter of fact we have seen that this distinction between the casual English pedagogy and our formalized American teaching is much less a distinction between England and America than between the aristocratic and the democratic way of life. As the English lower classes have pushed their way up into the secondary schools and colleges it has been found expedient to teach them, on the formal American model, acquirements which English students were formerly supposed to inherit. There was little need to

teach English to the son of an English gentleman. His vocabulary, intonation and accent were ipso facto correct. The son of the London cockney must be weaned away from his home environment in the County Council schools. The tutorial dressing-gown and tobacco-pipe type of education may do very well for a privileged class, but it is too cumbersome and expensive for the plain people of the world.

Book education is prescribed by original American conditions. One outstanding English book on which were educated many of the plain people who colonized the United States is the Bible. It was a textbook passionately studied and lived with in the lower middle-class and yeoman homes from which the Nonconformist elements were recruited. Among the Church of England better classes there was little of that searching of the Scriptures which has been the hallmark of English sectarianism. The authority of a Book thus established itself in the democratic tradition. It was reinforced by the circumstances of pioneer life which made self-help in the matter of teaching almost as much a necessity as self-medication in matters of health. The educational Correspondence Courses about which Americans will jest because they are a national institution are only another form of this self-help by way of the printed word. The Bible, the *Farmer's Almanac*, Noah Webster, McGuffey, up to the latest correspondence course in aviation or radio, make up the textbook tradition of American democracy.

When we have textbooks we have formalism. When we have little red schoolhouses we have prim schoolmarms inculcating the same set of grammatical rules from Maine to Oregon and from Minnesota to the new schools in the Appalachian highlands. It may be Abraham Lincoln reading his book by the dim light of the wood fire, or it may be a New York schoolteacher of the year 1939 in a spacious classroom teaching English to fifty Italian immigrant children. In both cases the authority of a textbook is involved, the sanctity of a written code.

The enormous influx of non-English immigrants over a period of very nearly a century has contributed to the uniformity and stability of the English tongue in the United States. The children of the newcomers have perforce learned their English from books. They have learned it correctly, formally, perhaps a bit ornately. The children of the foreign-born will often write the English language with greater fluency and style than the children of the old English stock. To these later comers the English language is an achievement, something attained by their labor and their father's labor, and it has a greater value than something that comes as a matter of course. People are less concerned about their heritages than about their acquisitions. The better classes in England are

more careless about their English grammar and elocution than the American democratic masses of non-English stock.

To the textbooks from which this nation has learned its language, mentioned above, we may add two more: Blackstone's *Commentaries* and, grouped together, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and other basic texts of American history. When we say Blackstone, it is another way of emphasizing the lawyer influence in American life. Among the books which young Abraham Lincoln pored over, together with *Robinson Crusoe*, Bunyan, Shakespeare, Burns and the Bible, was the *Revised Statutes of Indiana*. Later on, when young Lincoln read law in New Salem, he must have had for his chief textbook the famous *Commentaries*. That book, from its first appearance in 1765, sold as well in America as in Great Britain. It was the only textbook of the American law student. "Upon all questions of private law, at least, this book stood for the law itself throughout the country, and at least for a generation to come exercised an influence on jurisprudence which no other work has since enjoyed." Blackstone has lost that unique position, but he still forms a part of the regular curriculum in many American law schools.

The influence of Blackstone and the general lawyer influence on the vocabulary and rhythm of American speech were exerted in behalf of a clear, straightforward, one may almost say lean and athletic, style. This will no doubt strike one as odd. We have learned to speak of the jungle of the law and to think of legal language as labyrinthine and pedantic idiom designed for the undoing of the layman. But when we go back to the beginnings of the American nation and compare the lawyers of the time with the men of letters and the prevalent epistolary style in business and in private life we find the lawyers nearest to us today in rhythm and accent. The first volume of Blackstone appeared eleven years before the first volume of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* and twenty-five years before Boswell's *Johnson*. The balanced rhetorical periods of Gibbon and the colloquial but archaic Boswell are further from us in feeling and pace than the following lines from Blackstone:

And now it is laid down, that a slave or negro, the instant he lands in England he becomes a freeman; that is, the law will protect him in the enjoyment of his person and his property. Yet, with regard to any right which the master may have lawfully acquired to the perpetual service of John or Thomas, this will remain in exactly the same state as before; for this is no more than the same status of subjection for life which every apprentice submits to for the space of seven years, or sometimes for a longer term. Hence too it follows that the infamous and unchristian practice of withholding

baptism from negro servants, lest they should thereby gain freedom, is totally without foundation as well as without excuse. The law of England acts upon general and extensive principles; it gives liberty, rightly understood, that is protection, to a Jew, a Turk or a heathen, as well as to those who profess the true religion of Christ; and it will not dissolve a civil obligation between master and servant on account of the alteration of faith in either of these parties; but the slave is entitled to the same protection in England before as after baptism; and whatever service the heathen negro owed of right to his American master by general not by local law, the same, whatever it be, he is bound to render when brought to England and made a Christian.

The ruling that a slave won his freedom when he set foot on English soil was made by Lord Mansfield, and we may quote a few words from a speech by him in the House of Lords in 1770 to show how simply lawyers could speak—at least when they wanted to:

I have waited with patience to hear what argument might be urged against the bill; but I have waited in vain. The truth is there is no argument that can weigh against it. The justice and expediency of this bill are such as to render it self-evident. It is a proposition of that nature that can neither be weakened by argument nor entangled with sophistry. Much indeed has been said by some noble Lords on the wisdom of our ancestors and how differently they thought from us. I shall say nothing on the wisdom of our ancestors.

The legal style has been a power in shaping the rhythm of American speech because the lawyers have been among the nation's leading educators, by way of politics. This influence they have exercised through the great historic documents, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, supplemented by the great historic orations which in more or less complete form found their way into the schoolbooks. In the second place, the lawyer's style has shaped the language through the run-of-the-mine campaign speeches. Most of our candidates for office are lawyers by profession. Spread-eagle oratory is not the typical American political oratory, even if the star-spangled banner, the foreign despot, and a man's best friend, his mother, are part of the fixed tradition. They are, after all, decorations, much admired, but recognized for what they are. The usual American political speech is not flamboyant, at least in its vocabulary. The misconception has not left untouched the greatest names in the history of American eloquence. Daniel Webster did not normally move on the level of the exordium of the Bunker Hill Address and the Reply to Hayne. He holds in his grasp the hearts of a nation when he says, "Venerable men, you have come

down to us from a former generation"; when he says, "Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable." But in the same Reply to Hayne he could speak, as Webster did for the most part, in the following tone:

And now, Mr President, let me run the honorable gentleman's doctrine a little into its practical application. Let us look at his probable *modus vivendi*. If a thing can be done, an ingenious man can tell how it is to be done. Now, I wish to be informed how this State interference is to be put in practice, without violence, bloodshed, and rebellion. We will take the existing case of the tariff law. South Carolina is said to have made up her opinion about it. If we do not repeal it—as we probably shall not—she will then apply to the case the remedy of her doctrine. She will, we must suppose, pass a law of her Legislature, declaring the several acts of Congress, usually called the tariff laws, null and void, so far as they respect South Carolina or the citizens thereof. So far, all is a paper transaction, and easy enough. But the Collector at Charleston is collecting the duties imposed by these tariff laws; he therefore must be stopped. The Collector will seize the goods if the duties are not paid. The State authorities will undertake their rescue.

When Daniel Webster's colleague, Henry Clay, discussed national defense in the Senate it was in the vocabulary and the rhythms of today:

On this interesting topic a diversity of opinion has existed almost ever since the adoption of the present government. On the one hand, there appear to me to have been attempts made to precipitate the nation into all the evils of naval extravagance, which have been productive of so much mischief in other countries; and, on the other, strongly feeling this mischief, there has existed an unreasonable prejudice against providing such a competent naval protection for our commercial and maritime rights as is demanded by their importance, and as the increased resources of the country justify.

The role played by the schoolbook in language training is continued for our adult population by the great nonacademic textbook, the newspaper. The press expounds the same political ideas all over the country in the same vocabulary with only a minimum of variation between the metropolitan daily newspaper and the small-town weekly paper. Uniformity is fostered by centralization in the gathering and distribution of news matter. The "patent insides" which make up a large part of the contents of the small country papers come to them from syndicate headquarters which serve a nation-wide audience. The chain newspapers in the large towns are in a similar case. The most potent factors in this field are the great news agencies. The identical dispatch sent out to thousands

of newspapers obviously inculcates a uniform English style in readers and writers. The local reporter is bound to be influenced in his humbler sphere by the literary style of the outside material arriving from the big news centers. A modest news item from a very small place which has something to tell the outside world will be couched in the traditional style of the Associated Press or the United Press—often, to be sure, because it has been rewritten in headquarters. The reporter learns to write by imitation, just as poets and novelists learn to write by imitation. That uniform style of the Associated Press, taking it as typical of the American newspaper style, is an interesting combination of the vivid and the ornate; dynamic in the single word and elaborate in the sentence structure. The ample, one might almost say the orotund, style is surprisingly present in the popular tabloids which have subordinated words to pictures. In the same press which has given to mankind the "love nest," the "death tryst" and the "needle-thug," we read about the fighting in Ethiopia:

Headed directly into the teeth of a redoubtable array of Italian infantry and artillery, armies of Ethiopian warriors were on the march tonight for a pile-driving, head-on attack on Marshal Pietro Badoglio's forces centred around Makale. Flushed with their victories over the native troops of the Italian war machine, Ethiopian tribesmen have worked themselves into a patriotic frenzy.

It is an overcharged and prolix style that manages to achieve clarity and movement. The most significant point for our present purpose is the diction employed in a mass newspaper addressing itself to a vast audience which prefers pictures to words: "redoubtable array," and "patriotic frenzy," and "flushed with their victories." Further on in the same dispatch we encounter "the spearhead of the Ethiopian troops" and "the brunt of the attack." The letter press under a photograph accompanying the dispatch from which we have quoted says:

Rare photo of Ras Nassibu, Ethiopian commander, on southern front. European trained in military strategy, he shuns tribal regalia and pores over war map. Under his able leadership Il Duce's advance has been halted.

This is impressive English style in the same issue of a newspaper whose headlines declare, "Watts to Wed Triangle Girl," "Hayes Birth Stand Hit by Clerics as Danger" and "Milne Skipped Hotel Bill on Hoax Kidnap." The text under the last heading begins:

While arrangements were reportedly being made yesterday to post bail for Cable Jones Milne 4th, who is charged with attempted extortion, authorities disclosed that the kidnap hoaxer faces another charge.

This is newspaper style in the popular press because copybook English and sometimes Johnsonian English leap out at one in our democracy, and there is really no danger that the ordinary American vocabulary will be reduced to the single word "okay" in several hundred inflections. It is not likely to happen because of the counterinfluence of the newspaper style with its ample vocabulary and rich effects, not the least often in the sports columns. The "fistic encounter" which is a prize fight, and the baseball recruit whose fine fielding "materially assists" in bringing a fourth pennant to Cleveland, and the veteran southpaw pitcher who yields to the "relentless toll of time," and "the consensus of opinion" by twenty-four sports editors which selects the most useful baseball player of the year—it is a treasure house of the English language from which the plain people may be expected to continue to draw in the future as they have drawn in the past.

4

The thesis was advanced in our chapter on the World War that foremost among the causes which drew America into the European conflict were, broadly speaking, Shakespeare, John Bunyan and the English Bill of Rights of 1689 as restated in our Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution. If it is true, as one school of opinion maintains, that British propaganda brought the United States into the war, then it was extraordinary foresight on the part of the authors of the British publicity campaign to have made their preparations as far back as *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Hamlet*—if not indeed as far back as Chaucer, when the language common to Woodrow Wilson and Sir Edward Grey began to take shape.

A common language is in itself propaganda of the most powerful kind, irrespective of the special message it may convey in the special instance. We may put it bluntly by saying that there will always be British propaganda in the United States as long as there are these two nations speaking the same language. Substitute for the newer and much abused word "propaganda" the older word "influence," and it will impress the reader as a natural state of things that the two English-speaking nations should influence each other by the mere fact of their co-existence and without the intervention of skilled propagandists discharging hypnotic waves across the Atlantic. English influence plays its part in America not because Englishmen deliberately set to work to influence Americans, but because from the beginning English thinking and living have influenced thought and action in the United States.

In the troubled and anxious Winter of 1938-39, following upon the Central European crisis and the Munich Four-Power settlement, there were Americans to say that the British propaganda machine was again at work to bring this country into a European war. But if the passionate concern with which the American people regarded the forward march of the aggressor dictatorships in Europe and Asia was the product of British war incitation, pursued for British interests, what shall be said of the Oxford Peace Pledge, half a dozen years earlier? Would that be British propaganda intended to convert America to pacifism? It was in 1933 that the members of the Oxford Union, the celebrated debating society at the English university, adopted the resolution that under no circumstances would they ever fight for King or Country. Just how seriously intended was this Oxford Pledge has always been a matter of doubt. The young men of the Union are fond of elaborate spoofing, and have been known to debate subjects like "Resolved that the Fall of Rome was a smaller misfortune than the discovery of America." Whether or not the original Oxford Peace Pledge had its tongue in its cheek, the significant thing is that it won instant and widespread imitation in this country. The war polls swept American campuses. They showed no such definite swing to pacifism as the Oxford vote, though the majority opinion was definitely against war. It is not, however, the actual state of campus opinion that counts but the fact that an English college vogue overran the United States. It was another instance of American susceptibility to English intellectual fashions on the lower level, to English intellectual influence on the higher plane.

The years before the World War witnessed a rising wave of English influence in American ideas and writing, and the decade after the war saw it mount to great heights. The great vogue of the Russian writers in the United States after the Armistice—of Dostoevsky in the novel and Chekhov in the theater—was not the result, as one might conjecture, of a large immigration from Russia in the preceding generation which created a public familiar with the great Slav writers or more susceptible to their appeal than was the older American taste. The great Russian writers came to this country from England where Dostoevsky had established himself before the war, supplanting the earlier and less tempestuous Tolstoy and Turgenev. Largely under Russian influence, English realism in the novel asserted itself in the early years of the century, and English realism soon made itself felt in the United States. The earlier pioneer efforts of Stephen Crane and Frank Norris were isolated and experimental. The earliest and best books of Theodore Dreiser may be said to have gone virtually unnoticed. Not until the year 1915, approxi-

mately, did Dreiser begin to come into his own. By that time a strong realistic wind was blowing from England, where a whole school of young writers was adapting the Slav touch to English tastes. Arnold Bennett worshiped the Russians. The ingenious H. G. Wells in a new phase of his wide-ranging talent had written *Ann Veronica* and *The Passionate Friends*. The new climate—in part Dostoevsky, in part Arnold Bennett—spread across the Atlantic.

The end of the World War saw this invasion of English ideas enormously accelerated. American postwar disillusionment would no doubt have come in any case, as it did in every corner of the globe, but the note was first struck in England. A brilliant English journalist and soldier, E. C. Montague, wrote a little book of which the title *Disenchantment* might serve for the whole body of postwar literature—fiction, poetry, history, biography, the social sciences. Sinclair Lewis does not derive from the English novelists, but he is the spiritual child of Lytton Strachey, of J. Maynard Keynes, and again Mr H. G. Wells, this time of the *Outline of History*.

It is not within the scope of this book to attempt even the barest summary of Anglo-American intellectual relations in our own time. Only the subject can be stated, and we must therefore be content with but one more item—the new economic and social thinking inspired by Soviet Russia. That vast experiment plainly stood in no need of intermediaries or interpreters, and the American people, like every other nation, has observed and pondered postwar Russia for itself. It is nevertheless true that in very large measure American ideas about Soviet Russia have been shaped by British ideas. Our so-called Leftist thinking and action have been influenced by British models. Radical labor theory in this country has been much more heavily influenced by British radical labor theory than by American labor facts. Communism has won prestige in American eyes when preached by British intellectuals.

Propaganda obviously will not describe a relationship and influence so permanent, intimate and pervasive. The older commonplace explanation is the sounder. The common heritage of language and free institutions will explain a common response by the English-speaking peoples on both sides of the Atlantic to the same major stimuli. Interaction across the ocean is organic, as in Shakespeare, and not galvanic, as in propaganda. The ties that hold the English-speaking nations together have obviously been drawn closer in the last few years by the rise of totalitarian despotism. We are not speaking here of the primary fact that freedom in America and in Great Britain is challenged by a common foe. Dismiss for the sake of argument the possibility of an actual test of armed

strength between the democratic nations and the police states. We are speaking in this chapter of intellectual and spiritual influences in the English-speaking world, and it is a fact of momentous significance that Germany has seceded from the community of Western civilization. In terms of our immediate problem the English influence seems destined to become stronger than ever because of the withdrawal of German competition. Just as the German ethnic element in the United States has been second only to the English-speaking stocks, so in the realm of ideas German influences have been second only to English influences among those that have come to this country from across the seas. German universities have played an important role in the lives of Americans who went to Germany to study, and of many more Americans whose college studies at home have been molded by German methods and German scholarship. The influence of German philosophy, of German music, in later years of German science, has been profound in this country as in so many other parts of the world. This German influence is destined to shrink, and perhaps even to shrivel away, if the totalitarian ideal of life embodied in the National Socialist philosophy continues to dominate the German nation. The case is not parallel to the wave of anti-German feeling in the World War which banned the German language from American classrooms and produced a general rupture of cultural ties with Germany. That was in large measure a temporary estrangement. Americans turned away from the German language and German books because Americans were facing Germans in the battlefield. By the Nazi German teaching there never can be peace between totalitarian art, science, and philosophy and the arts and learning of the free peoples. The free mind and spirit and the co-ordinated and militarized mind and spirit live in different worlds. And what has been said about Germany is true in varying degree of the other areas of despotism—Soviet Russia, where science and art must conform to politics; Italy; the new Japan.

Intellectual ties between America and Britain are bound to grow stronger as the English-speaking nations turn to each other for those commodities of the mind and the spirit which they formerly imported from markets now padlocked by the new totalitarian owners.

In a field remote from intellectual fashion and tastes we see the English influence assert itself in the enhanced social prestige of prize fighting in the United States after the World War. We may find the precise point of departure in the historic contest in London between the French pugilist Georges Carpentier and the English champion Joe Beckett in December 1919. George Bernard Shaw wrote an eyewitness account of the battle for one of the intellectual British weekly journals. His story was

widely reproduced in this country, and when Carpentier came to the United States in 1920 the social status of the prize ring was established. No doubt it helped that Carpentier was well above the usual athlete of the squared ring in mental equipment and the personal graces. Within a few years we had produced a Carpentier of our own in the person of Gene Tunney, ex-marine, who conquered the redoubtable Jack Dempsey and retired with a fortune to the life of a country gentleman and the society of college professors, writers and artists.

The nation's inflated pre-1929 prosperity helped to make a championship prize fight one of America's recognized First Nights. In the ringside seats on these august occasions the newspaper accounts never failed to mention the presence of leaders in the world of finance, business, politics, fashion, the theater. The fight between Carpentier and Jack Dempsey in July 1921 gave us our first million-dollar gate, the actual receipts being more than \$1,600,000. Very nearly two million dollars were paid by spectators when Gene Tunney took the championship from Jack Dempsey at Philadelphia in September 1926, and the return match between the two men a year later at Chicago saw an all-time record of \$2,650,000. Two years later came the stock-market collapse and the close of the million-dollar prize-fight era; but prestige continues to adhere to the ringside seats at big boxing matches.

5

The state of mind of the American people in the Christmastide of 1936 when Edward VIII abdicated the British crown for the love of a woman was not one of interest but of deep emotion. Americans behaved like participants in a cause of great moment and not like mere spectators at an absorbing spectacle. The people of this country seemed to have forgotten that they were not the subjects of Edward VIII and tithe payers to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. It became our own problem and our own quarrel. The conservative New York *Herald Tribune* showed itself a much better royalist than the London *Times* or the London *Morning Post*, in that it took a firmer stand for Edward VIII's prerogatives as a man against the shackles of the British Constitution. The liberal New York *World-Telegram* was much severer than the London *Herald*, a labor paper, on the British nobles and toffs who ousted a democratic king because he threatened their feudal privileges. It is not sufficient explanation that a king-emperor who renounces his throne for love is dazzling romance and drama. If it had been any other European crown, in the days when there were imperial crowns in

Europe, an abdication would not have evoked the same quality of response in the American people. In the case of a German or Russian or Chinese emperor it would have remained romance and high spectacle. The issue of kings and Commons, of archbishops and democracies, was debated by Americans as if the problems were their own. This came to pass because it was a British event, and because the radio address in which Edward VIII took leave of his empire and his subjects was in the English language. That factor basically conditions the problem of American neutrality in a European war, and it is only avoiding the issue to invoke the doctrine of propaganda.

Four great agencies of modern existence have been operating to bring about a greater uniformity of life and taste between the two English-speaking peoples. They are the popular press, the automobile, the films and radio. Of these the popular newspaper is the oldest but not the most important. The sensational British newspaper is in external appearance close kin to our own yellow press. Indeed, we might say that before the advent of our own tabloids the popular British press had rather the advantage of us in blatant headlines and vapid text. But beneath the shrieking headlines and the pictures and the textual inanities the pace of the popular British newspaper has not been greatly Americanized. In speed and vibrancy the London *Daily Mail* falls short of the soberest of American newspapers. The rush, the swirl, the heedlessness of our American life transcends type size and pictures. An American newspaper in a town of fifty thousand people will manage to convey a movement and excitement that are rarely to be found in any of the huge London dailies. The reason why British and American newspapers have come close only in externals is obvious. For all practical purposes the newspapers of one country do not circulate in the other. Their editors and managers may draw from a common stock of ideas, but they cater after all to two different publics and to two different temperaments.

Far different is the case of the motion picture and the radio. Both of them address themselves to a single audience in both countries, though there is no comparison between the frequency of transatlantic radio broadcast and the impact of Hollywood on the English-speaking world. Concerning the American films London *Punch* has a great deal of fun with the gangster lingo and its probable influence on the language of Englishmen, or the influence of Hollywood fashions and manners on the tastes and desires of the English masses; but it is an influence not to be laughed away in the longer reach of time. The gangster lingo will not permanently shape the speech of Young England, but our more normal American locutions have been winning their way, and are bound

to win their way, as long as five out of every six films consumed by the British people continue to be American. The language influence cannot work all one way. If the English public sees chiefly American pictures the number of English actors in American-made films has been growing rapidly. The pace of the average English film, compared with our Hollywood product, is like the distinction we have made between the popular newspapers of the two countries. But in the case of the films it is as if five out of every six newspapers read in England were American newspapers.

Because the motion picture is the talking picture, the American influence is here exerted on the common language. Radio comes into play. As the transatlantic broadcasts multiply and the short-wave radio extends its contacts we may reasonably expect a reciprocal influence not only in vocabulary but in phonetics. Something of the American burr and twang may be expected to creep across the Atlantic air waves, passing on the way a whiff of the English accent. It is radio that most effectively disposes of the argument that would endow us with a separate American Language. When the former Edward VIII made his abdication speech his English-speaking hearers were twice as numerous in the United States as in the British Empire; but they did not have the slightest difficulty in understanding him.

But it is the automobile that draws the two nations more closely together, of all the agencies mentioned; closer in the sense of actually molding the English temperament into greater semblance to our own American temperament. The reason would lie in the nature of the automobile as we have described it elsewhere, in its psychological and spiritual and social potencies. Englishmen are static and Americans are restless. Englishmen are phlegmatic and Americans are high strung. But the Englishman in an automobile cannot remain static, and while he may never be possessed by the restless devil in the blood which Kipling found driving the American, the Englishman must feel the effects of speed.

6

For more than two hundred years, from Poor Richard through Emerson to the latest crossroads philosopher in his syndicated newspaper column, runs the unbroken thread of American wisdom literature. The tradition moves on different levels in different men but it is essentially the same in theme and manner. The theme we have already described: it is man's power to shape his own destiny or, in any event, his own personality. The manner is homespun. Emerson's language is as racy

of the soil as Poor Richard's in his time. In smaller men the tone too often becomes a synthetic rural twang, but the feeling behind intonation and platitude will be genuine enough. At the very least it is a tradition of sustained popular appeal. It flourishes in the American theater.

In the year 1875 the actor Denman Thompson gave to the public his creation Joshua Whitcomb, who a decade later became the central figure in a full-grown play, *The Old Homestead*. More than sixty years later, in the middle of the second Roosevelt administration and after twenty years of realism and sophistication in American literature and theater, Broadway received with tumultuous acclaim a play which in spirit and method was the reincarnation of *The Old Homestead*. Once more on the American stage the simple life and the eternal virtues are extolled in dry, humorous, homely phrases. The philosophical grandfather in the Kaufman-Hart fantasia *You Can't Take It With You* is one more portrait in the gallery of lovable old men which adorns the American theater since the Civil War; for we may go back another ten years before Joshua Whitcomb to the year of Appomattox, when Joseph Jefferson brought forth Rip Van Winkle. The characters in the portrait gallery are not always old in years, as with Rip himself, and they are not always the highest type of citizen, again like Rip or his spiritual kinsman after many years, the hero of *Lightnin'*; but they are all of them men who say quaint things and pathetic things and usually helpful things in a quiet drawl. Seventy-five years ago Rip Van Winkle established a hold on the American people that endured for a generation. Ten years later it was *The Old Homestead*. In the last decade of the nineteenth century it was James A. Herne in *Shore Acres*, which held the center of the stage for half a dozen years until the Spanish-American War. Nearer our own time it becomes Frank Baker in *Lightnin'* and so to our own day. Even in a play depicting a highly eccentric household, to the point of mild dementia at times, Messrs Kaufman and Hart work in minor chords. The speeches are short, the emotion runs thin, the serious climaxes are muted. It is the slow New England pulse beat which we find natural in plays dealing with old homesteads and shore acres, but which, as a matter of fact, we accept just as easily for modern urban America, so firm a hold has the tradition taken on us. With this writing technique in chiaroscuro goes the acting technique in which American players excel—the quiet tone, the restrained, almost subdued manner which one might call the drawl in action.

America is the national habitat of jazz and Wild-West shows and gunman films. By comparison the English tempo in theater and film is one to which our tingling American nerves very often find it hard to adjust

themselves. Yet the deepest instincts of the American theater are against gusto. The plays which people like best are the quiet, homey, thin little plays, with or without their traditional mellow old men and lovable ne'er-do-wells. The theater critics in New York will display a vast enthusiasm in due season for the drama of storm and stress, for the violent psychology of Eugene O'Neill, for the drama of social revolt, for any sort of drama that brings new forces into the theater; but the drama reviewers are most profoundly and most easily moved by the simple, homey, quiet little play, the play which understates in the story and in the acting. Plays like Frank Craven's *The First Year* of an earlier decade, or Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* of the end of the 1930s, move the veteran play reviewers with a delight that submerges ideology and professional judgment. In their heart of hearts our best critics of the theater dislike gusto or bravura on the stage. They surrender to the tight-lipped call of New England.

We have been expounding a thesis which would have been more difficult to defend in the period ending roughly with the bottom of the business depression in the early 1930s. Then the dominating figure in the American theater was Eugene O'Neill with his researches in the spiritual underworld. In literature the postwar Naturalism had not yet passed its peak. In those days it seemed to be written on the face of the evidence that American taste had been weaned away from the Genteel Tradition with a vengeance. The very last adjectives in the world to describe the prevalent tone in the arts were homey and thin, and the very last charge to fling against our writers was the crime of understatement. The reaction set in about the time of the advent of the New Deal, which we use simply as chronological datum. Mr O'Neill himself turned from his dank explorations into the subcellar of the human soul to write a mellow play. The dramatic critic of the New York *Times* said of one new season that the playwrights were going in for kind hearts instead of spraying acid over their characters and over life.

We are obviously free to maintain that this was only one of the waves of intellectual fashion. The reaction would be only temporary, and the ground won in the long and prosperous campaign against the Genteel Tradition was a lasting conquest. That is what the future must show. Against this contention is the vast enthusiasm with which the American people turned—since we are speaking of the theater as a sample—to its ancient tastes; going back three quarters of a century in the specific instance. It may be only a case of the public growing weary of Naturalism and turning for a change to something new in the form of

mellowness and humor, but it may be a case of the public returning to something old and deep rooted. One might argue by analogy from the alleged revolutionary changes in American political and social thinking, which were taken as a matter of course in those same eventful, rebellious years, but about which people are not so sure today.

Because the American temper in the domain of intellect and art is innately hostile to gusto it falls more easily a victim to synthetic gusto. Phrases of revolutionary violence may come easily to the tongue, not because the speaker feels strongly, but because he does not feel strongly. His feelings are so little engaged that he has no difficulty in picking up the latest slogan, provided it has gained sufficient currency. In the earlier years of President Roosevelt's New Deal it was not uncommon for so-called boards of social service connected with individual church congregations to formulate programs of national action which the majority of the church members obviously could not endorse and might even find abhorrent. But just as churchgoers long ago were accused of never bringing their Sunday church morality into their week-day business, so the modern churchgoer does not always feel that a real connection exists between his own social practice and the social views uttered for him by his board of social service. This made it possible for one congregation in the vicinity of New York to receive a solemn warning against Easter shopping as a practice forced upon unsuspecting persons through astute propaganda for the sake of profits. It was odd to find the new Easter bonnet denounced in prosperous Suburbia as a capitalist excrescence, until one took notice of the verbiage—capitalism, propaganda, profits, the profit motive. This solemn pronunciamento was obviously the work of someone who accepted the popular anti-capitalist language of the moment and who himself was no doubt as sincere as he was lacking in judgment. To the members of the congregation there was nothing very startling in these strong anticapitalist views. The church members would never dream of saying these things themselves, but it seemed proper for a board of social service to express socially heterodox views.

Every nation has its intellectual fashions which become intellectual movements if they endure long enough. In the United States the swing of intellectual modes is more violent. In a commercial civilization the spirit of man is more susceptible to the fashions of the market place. In every country the writers and their public will turn from mordant themes to mellow themes, from acid to tolerance. In the United States the change will be more sudden and more startling and more inclusive, to the point of being universal. In a mellow season in the theater and in

books everything will be mellow, just as everything only a little while ago was sophisticated and raw and tough.

Criticism in the domain of learning and the arts is conditioned by the American philosophy of instrumentalism, by the innate belief that standards were made for man and not man for standards. It is an anti-intellectualist attitude which falls in with, where it does not actually create, other factors hostile to the rigid critical approach. Criticism in itself is suspect in a country which will only tolerate the noun "criticism" if accompanied by the adjective "constructive." Since not everybody is in a position at all times to offer constructive criticism on everything, it comes about that we pass easily from noncriticism to acceptance.

Individual critical opinion in America must assert itself against the national genius for uniformity, the national kindliness, the national disinclination to connect theories too closely with life, as we noted a little while ago. Above all there is the national reverence for a man and his job. People will say quite sincerely that this big new musical production which the theater critics have received coldly must have some very good points or why would the producer have put so much money into it? It is not an argument to be dismissed out of hand; faith raises a fair presumption of merit. If that new play should prove to be a popular success despite the critics the argument would tend to become irresistible. Success or failure, very few theatrical productions can be bad in critical esteem because they involve so many people making a living. That is the dominant touch in our literary criticism as well. Compared with European book reviewers our own reviewers are mildness itself because they approach their tasks as citizens and democrats before they are critics. They regard their profession as a trade rather than as an art. To damn a play is to interfere with many worthy people trying to make a living—the producer, the author, the actors, the stagehands, the ticket sellers, the press agents. To condemn a new book is to take the bread out of the mouth of a worthy young American, perhaps with a family to support and a long run of hard luck behind him. In the face of such human considerations what are principles and standards?

Obviously we are describing in absolute terms what is really a question of degree. American criticism knows how to be severe in a good cause, and European criticism knows how to subordinate standards to the human appeal. But good nature with us is much more likely to be carried to a point where it becomes a menace to good judgment and not rarely to common sense. Kindliness gives us the familiar type of book review which will say of a new historical work that it is seri-

ously defective in its facts, in its interpretation of the facts, in its general attitude and its method, but it is a book which no one can afford to do without. Speaking always within measure, American criticism feels the same reluctance to interfere with a man who wants to sell a book or a play as with a man who is trying to sell an automobile or a refrigerator. In the instrumentalist American creed the man has a higher claim over mere abstract considerations.

7

Because our instrumentalist national philosophy has always struck the keynote of Service, because the flow of emotion is thin and leisurely and the preferred language is homespun, Longfellow is a truer American poet than Walt Whitman on basic merit as he is, of course, in popular acceptance. Already we may note a marked devaluation in the status of Whitman whose great bulk filled so large a part of the nation's literary frame after the turn of the century and especially in the decade after the World War. Whitman receives nearly twice as much space in the Dictionary of American Biography as James Russell Lowell, which is quite understandable, but also twice as much space as Longfellow, which is not quite so understandable, or as Nathaniel Hawthorne, which many people will feel to be even more puzzling. To be sure, we must allow for the influence of contemporaneity even in a work of reference destined for the permanent record; whether or not Walt Whitman fully deserves his prestige in the generation beginning with the present century, the fact of that prestige would in itself compel attention. Otherwise we may note that the writer in the Dictionary admits the vanishing claims of Whitman as prophet and moralist; and though Whitman the poet towers higher than ever in this critic's esteem it is conceded that the American masses have not accepted him and the other poets have not often imitated him. Whitman's appeal has always been in great measure to those who chafed under the genteelity, the thin blood and slow pulse of American letters; he let the great outdoors into the American front parlor. But at this late day the critics are becoming aware that a pioneer and lawless nation may be also a front-parlor nation. Intellectual circles have sought to popularize the Paul Bunyan mythology and other experiments in American synthetic folklore, but it has found no popular welcome; people prefer "Hiawatha." Whitman stands above such crude promotion, but it is now recognized that he is not part of the American folk tradition; he is a solitary.

One can see why. It does not follow that a singer who intones hymns

to democracy and calls the roll of the states and lets their sonorous syllables resound thereby becomes the poet of American democracy. Despite the trumpet calls and the democratic hymns American democracy has not recognized Whitman. But our democracy has taken to its heart Longfellow, even if he was a professor and spoke in gentle cadences. The writer on Longfellow in the Dictionary of Biography exemplifies a common misunderstanding when he says, "Longfellow's approach even to American life was through his library. The poems on slavery, though sincere enough, seem 'literary' and slight for so terrible a theme." Yet this writer answers himself completely in his concluding lines. Though he finds that Longfellow's fame will never again be what it was in his own century, "it remains to be seen whether by the pure style and gracious humanity of his best poems he will not outlast louder men in popular favor."

That is it precisely. A man does not have to write on contemporary subjects like slavery to reach the heart of the American people; he may do so by force of his gracious humanity. He may write on a theme from China or Scandinavia in a way that is more American than an ode on the Fourth of July. So the "Psalm of Life" has no geography more specific than footprints on the sands of time, against the very specific and reverberating Ohios, Minnesotas, Missouris, Manahattas in Walt Whitman's lines. But when Longfellow remarks that the sight of our footprints on the sands of time may induce some forlorn and weary brother to take heart again he proclaims rock-bottom Americanism. It is the instrumentalism, the pious humanism, the fraternity, which underlies our wholesale Service and Success literature, but also Poor Richard and Emerson. Though the Alps are foreign and Walt Whitman's democratic vistas bear familiar state names, the doctrine of "Excelsior" strikes deep into hearts that the doctrine of "I Celebrate Myself" leaves cold. It is with Longfellow as with Rudyard Kipling; not the special message and not even the special manner counts, but the basic communion between singer and audience, his representative character. Critics who detested Kipling's political and social doctrines and had their reservations about Kipling as poet nevertheless said, when Kipling died, that he stands next to Shakespeare as part of the English tradition. The gentle Longfellow in his library, concerned with warm human commonplaces, with Service, with hitting the line hard and keeping a stiff upper lip, is in the old American tradition of Poor Richard and the essay on Self-Reliance.

CHAPTER XXV

The Middle Nation

AMERICA is by several tests the middle nation, as we shall see in the course of the present chapter. In no respect is America more emphatically middle than in the position it occupies in the great debate between private initiative and the collective way of life. The United States is destined to remain a free capitalist nation because it is immunized against the collectivist assault by the presence of a heavy dose of collectivism in its veins.

Little in the American record will justify a reputation, at home and abroad, as the *laissez-faire* nation pre-eminent, the land of rugged individualism, the land which envisages life as a cutthroat game in which the winner takes all, as a race in which the devil takes the hindmost. That reputation, let us note, long antedates the mood of harsh self-criticism which set in with the Armistice and was fostered by economic collapse and the rise of anticapitalist ideology. It was to be expected that a revolutionary mood, as the New Deal might be called within its limited range, should have little good to say about the past with which it has broken; and so we need not take too seriously the savage arraignment of American life in terms of jungle and tooth and claw as formulated after 1929 by the rebels in their books and public speeches and by the mural artists on a thousand walls of American public buildings. The legend of America as the land of unfettered individualism goes much further back than 1932 or even 1918. Long ago we were in European eyes the Land of the Almighty Dollar.

This tradition of rugged American individualism rests only on a superficial study of the record, or at best on a study of only part of the record. It overlooks the very large role which collectivist action has

played in the building of the nation and, before that, in the opening up and settlement of the Continent. It is a one-sided view of the national history that is well illustrated in popular thinking on the subject of the Pioneer. He is the man who with the aid of his own stout arm, his stout heart and his trust in God hewed a new civilization out of the wilderness. Our own sheltered, collectivized and steam-heated generations look back with a sigh to the sturdy independence of that pioneer life when men guided the plow with one hand and held the rifle with the other. We look back from our own communal life, from a daily existence which is becoming more and more inconceivable without a hundred invisible servitors, from this collectivism or parasitism, as we may choose to call it, to the pioneer days when people grew the food they ate, wove the clothes they wore, built the houses that sheltered them, and were dependent on no man; a man was the captain of his fate. It is a picture which stretches from the beginnings in Virginia and New England to the men and women who built their sod houses in Kansas in the early 1890s. Not very much more than a generation ago pioneer mothers gave birth to children in primitive prairie shelters, far from neighbors and doctors, in virtually a different civilization from our own urbanized and collectivized existence.

That is the familiar picture of the pioneer, and it overlooks one fact of the very first importance. The pioneer did hew down the forest and break the sod with his own hands, but the forest and the prairie came to him free, or virtually free. He toiled and sweated to bring the land into cultivation, but the ownership of the land—the dream of farmer mankind since the beginning of time, the object for which great revolutions have been made and torrents of blood have been shed—the land came to the American pioneer without travail. Critics of the present social system have deduced the gloomiest consequences from Professor Turner's doctrine of the vanished Frontier, from the epochal fact that before the end of the nineteenth century America's free land was exhausted. Such critics have not paused to weigh all the implications of the fact that the pioneer did get his land free. So eager have people been to read for our own generation the lesson of vanished Opportunity that they do not stop to note that there was, once upon a time, Opportunity. The rugged individuals of the pioneer age were really the beneficiaries of bounty. They inherited an estate, albeit an undeveloped estate.

The occupation of the territory of the United States is a story of land grant and land bounty. In the beginning the king bestowed entire provinces on individuals or corporate patentees, and they in turn gave

or sold the land to actual occupiers in various intermediate stages. Even when land was sold, the prices, compared with European prices, were nominal. It is not too great an exaggeration to say that the settler received the land on condition that he supplied the labor needed to develop it. The landowner's profits came from what we call today unearned increment. He prospered as the country filled up, giving value to that part of the acreage of which he retained possession. We are speaking in the very broadest terms. There were colonies, like Pennsylvania and Maryland, where the quit-rent problem was a real one; but for the whole colonial picture it may be said that the land was there for the asking—and the labor.

Let us come nearer home in time. Since the formation of the Federal Union the public lands in possession of the United States—that is to say, the whole national territory outside of the thirteen original states and Texas—have amounted to approximately one and a half billion acres. Of this huge area a billion acres have been distributed to private owners, a quarter of a billion acres await disposition, a quarter of a billion acres are in national forests and Indian reservations. Of the billion acres that have passed into private hands something more than half has been given away by the Federal Government. In 1862 Congress passed the first Homestead Act bestowing one hundred and sixty acres on every settler who paid a small registration fee. By the year 1935 something like a quarter of a billion acres were distributed under the Homestead Acts. This is the equivalent of one and a half million individual farms. Another million farms were carved out of the lands granted by the Federal Government to the states for public uses—education, railroads, canals, roads—and by the states sold to occupiers. For a hundred years after 1830 the average price for public lands where actually sold was one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre. Something like two and a half million farms have been carved out of the nation's free land since the Civil War—a number very nearly half that of all the farms in the country in 1900, and forty per cent of the six and a quarter million farms in the country today.

Thus it may be said that the tradition of bounty in the form of free land has run unbroken from the beginning of our continental story. The settler invested his toil, his privations, his heartbreak; but he did start with free capital. In the seventeenth century and later the indentured servant paid with seven years' labor for his passage money to the land of promise, but when the seven years of service were at an end he received, in Virginia and no doubt elsewhere, his farm. Those same seven years in his old European home would have exacted from him

just as much arduous labor, would have given him a less bountiful living, and would have left him at the end in his original proletarian state.

The national tradition is rooted in the idea of bounty; it is familiar with the notion of pension and subsidy; it speaks out explicitly in Protection as the name for our tariff or, as Henry Clay called it, the American System. It has been the American System to protect a manufacturer when he makes a start and to go on protecting him; to protect the American workingman in his high standard of living, and the American farmer against the foreign peasant. We have the paradox of a land of rugged individualism where individuals have always looked to others for livelihood and protection. The national experience has been far more collectivist than the usual argument assumes. The farmer who has always had his free land, who has received free schools and roads, who has had in emergencies Government flood relief and tax relief, who has demanded greenbacks and free silver to lighten his debts, has been much more of a collectivist than the city worker. Up to the collapse of 1929 the urban worker never dreamt of turning to Government for aid when he was out of work.

2

Collectivism is a sufficiently proper term to describe a trait of the national character often stigmatized by foreign observers and America's own candid sons. This is the crusading spirit of the people, the sense of moral responsibility for our neighbor's well-being, material and spiritual. It is the belief in making people good by compulsion which foreign observers used to deprecate—before European totalitarianism came forward to demonstrate a confiscation of personal liberty unknown in modern times. Our experiment in national Prohibition is the classic example of collectivist American ethics. The trait shows in our refusal to separate a man's private life from his public duties, though the former rigor in this sphere has considerably abated with the general swing of the times to greater frankness in sex relations. This exercise of a moral censorship by the community over the individual is not basically puritanism; it is fraternity, or—for purposes of our present discussion—collectivism. An older American word and a better one is neighborliness. It is the strong sense of the group that underlies our superficial individualism, and we may compare it with the temper of the English people. They have long had in England a trade-union movement far surpassing our own in numbers and discipline. They have a co-operative movement, embracing in the year 1931 nearly seven million members,

compared with our embryo co-operatives. The English rural population is domiciled in compact villages instead of the separate farm homesteads which are the American norm. And yet the compact English masses are individualistic in their attitude to life, and the American mass attitude is neighborly and comradely and social, and our highest ideal of citizenship is to be just folks.

An essentially collectivist people thus thinks of itself and has been accepted by the rest of the world as a nation of outstanding individualists. It will help us to resolve the contradiction if we remember that the inner drive of the American spirit is towards conformity, that its impulses are co-operative and not competitive. Because of that very bent of the national character it can permit itself to display a surface individualism, a lawlessness, which in the long run do not matter since they will not avail against the set of the current. A fraternal and neighborly people can play with rugged individualism. In any event it makes a pretty debate to ask which goes deeper into the reality of American life—the rugged individualism of Big Business which builds up huge private fortunes, or the moral compulsion which dictates that such fortunes shall be left in large part to public uses. If the national ethos is still the ethos of the mining camp with its easy come and easy go then we must give America credit for the easy generosity of the mining camp. Which goes deeper down into the national character, its lawlessness or its good humor? If the deeper trait is good humor and fraternity we are compelled to reduce to their proper proportions the so-called ferocity of our competitive life, the chase of the dollar, the corruption of our politics and the universal materialism that is supposed to measure everything by the sole standard of success.

A people may have its unwritten character, as nations have their unwritten constitutions. Our own Federal Constitution is a formal document. Great Britain needs no written charter because the character of the people as shaped by British history constitutes a basic body of principles. If the natural constitution of the American people is fellowship we must learn to discount such traits as are out of harmony with the basic character. Of such exceptions there are many, but nothing can be further from the truth than the popular phrase which describes life in America as a savage competition in which devil takes the hindmost. The phrase is alien to the moralistic spirit we have been discussing, the sense of being one's brother's keeper. The desire to win is a national trait; to play the game every minute and hit the line hard are elementary rules in the American code. With ritual uniformity the college songs call upon the football teams to fight, fight, fight for old

Columbia, or Yale, or the Georgia Institute of Technology; but it is obviously a fight to pile up touchdowns for Alma Mater without the least suggestion of a devil-take-the-hindmost feeling towards the other team. The feeling of hate is not basic in the fierce competition of American business. That, too, is a game played by men who hit the line hard; but instead of devil taking the hindmost it is most often a case of the winner and the loser getting together and organizing a little combination against the public. The march to power of the business titans has sometimes been over the bodies of small competitors; but these are the exceptions in our business history. Far more often the object has been not to ruin an opponent, but to make him sell out to the Trust at a handsome profit. American business violence is not the philosophy of the jungle but the recklessness of the Donnybrook Fair. It is the sandlot baseball game between bitter rivals which winds up in a fight quite without malice. They are the untoward incidents which punctuate without really marrying the annual Teamsters' Masquerade and Ball.

The free land is gone and the mining-camp civilization is gone, but the spirit of the frontier and the mining camp is alive in the people. It is not that our primitive age is still so near us in the past that we feel the "lag" of it. The country has been a frontier and a mining camp from the beginning, and by now the national temper is set. We have to believe that the people will remain what it is today—a people of frontier violence and carelessness, but also of frontier generosity and brotherhood. It works recklessly and it plays recklessly. Big football games claim a certain number of lives, not among the players but among the spectators after the game, racing home in their high-speed automobiles. It is a lawless people, but a fraternal people; whereas many analysts of the American character have chosen to confuse lawlessness with cruelty.

Conceivably, then, a people whose unwritten constitution is fraternity may stand in lesser need of consumers' co-operatives and even of trade unions than a people in whom the sense of mutual obligation is not so strong. A people with an extraordinary talent for emergency organization stands in lesser need of permanent defensive organizations. By this is not meant that without trade unions we may count on the average American employer to treat his workers with full justice in sheer goodness of heart. But the American employer has been forced to yield to the silent pressure of the American Idea which compels recognition—with more or less delay—of human rights. Where every man is as good as everybody else and better there is an immanent collectivism that works for social justice.

3

The alleged extremes of wealth and poverty in the United States do not stand up under scrutiny. It is true that this country has produced gigantic fortunes such as England, our nearest competitor, cannot rival or even approach; but it is also true that these colossal accumulations of wealth are, by comparison, isolated peaks. England in proportion to her national wealth has more rich men. This is of primary significance. As a social force a large number of moderately wealthy men will outweigh a larger aggregate of wealth in fortunes of monumental size. There is a difference in social and psychological climate between a wealthy class and a number of wealthy individuals. The huge American fortunes—Rockefeller, Henry Ford, the Mellons, the Harknesses—are capitalist fortunes but they are not luxury fortunes. They represent power and domination, if you will, but they do not typify the Rich in the traditional sense—the fortunate ones of earth who loll in the traditional luxury while the poor starve at their gates. Our multimillionaires may constitute a plutocracy, for the sake of the argument, but they are not a sybaritocracy. It is impossible to think of John D. Rockefeller and Henry Ford in terms of splendid castles and yachts and champagne and fine silks. It may very well be that the gulf between rich and poor is wider in France, though over there the individual bourgeois is not very rich.

The gulf between rich and poor is certainly wider in England. Persons who in the year 1929 paid income tax on an income of twenty-five thousand dollars, or five thousand pounds sterling, numbered one hundred and three thousand in the United States and twenty-nine thousand in Great Britain. At first glance the count is against us; with less than three times the British population we had three and a half times the number of individuals in the twenty-five-thousand-dollar class or higher. In that year, however, the national income was eighty billion dollars in the United States and between fifteen and twenty billion dollars in Great Britain. With nearly five times the British national income we had three and a half times the number of income receivers on the twenty-five-thousand-dollar level or higher; a heavier cream rises to the top in the English milk. We may go further and note that five thousand pounds sterling are nominally the equivalent of twenty-five thousand dollars, but actually have a much larger purchasing power in a country where the average earnings of a railway worker were something under eight hundred and fifty dollars a year against an

average of seventeen hundred dollars in the United States. If we were to say that in England an income of thirty-five hundred pounds, nominally \$17,500, is really equivalent to twenty-five thousand dollars in this country, it is evident that, in proportion to the population, there are many more rich Englishmen than there are rich Americans.

At the other end of the social scale we may note that in the year 1928 the number of persons in receipt of Poor-Law relief in Great Britain, in their homes or in workhouses, was close to 1,600,000. The submerged British population was thus four per cent of the whole people, and in the same ratio we should have had in the United States at that time more than five million destitute persons. This would be very nearly half of our whole Negro population which has stood forth in recent years as the type of our underprivileged classes. The average wage of the farm hand in the South Atlantic states in 1928 was thirty-five dollars a month, and we may estimate the total income of a Negro rural family at forty-five dollars a month. In other words we find that the Southern Negro farm family, at the bottom of the economic scale, has an income approximately two thirds of the average annual wage of British skilled labor.

4

America is the middle nation in the literal sense of being pre-eminently the nation of the Middle School. This is the foreign name for what our educators call the Secondary School and the people call high school. We have spoken elsewhere of the high school as one of the hallmarks of American civilization. It is the one form of Americanization that spread most rapidly over Europe after the World War, an influence far more momentous than the spread of American jazz or even of American films. Europe before the war had the People's School, which corresponded to our grade school, beyond which the children of the masses did not go. For the privileged classes there were the universities, with the secondary schools which prepared for them. Admission of the plain people to the middle schools is one of the chief gains in the war in Europe, though even now it is scarcely more than the beginning of a process that is more than half completed with us. As far back as the census of 1930 we had in the high schools one half of all the children of high-school age.

It seems eminently proper that the United States, where long ago it was said that everyone is as good as anybody else and better, should not have carried this egalitarian creed to the point of setting the edu-

cational bench mark at the bottom. We do not really mean that the uneducated man is as good as the educated man, except for the basic inalienable rights enumerated by Thomas Jefferson. We mean rather that the poor man is as good as the rich man in his right of access to the opportunity to make himself as good as the next man; and one such opportunity is in the schools. We have set the bench mark in the middle—in the middle schools, in the high schools—though we are now engaged in shifting it forward another two years to the junior college. In the historical perspective we are the middle nation in schooling. We stand between aristocracy and proletarianism, between culture as a caste preserve and the destruction of culture as a step towards educating the masses. We have been content to raise the level of the masses to the high-school mark without declaring war on culture. It may be, as has often been charged, that indirectly we have warred on culture by lowering the university standard to the high-school level. The soaring mind or spirit with us finds itself pulled down by the drag of a huge average mass passively exercised. The highest culture cannot use its wings in a high-school atmosphere.

That is for time to show. The evidence so far in hand leads one to surmise that America is not destined to remain a high-school nation—a secondary-school people—in a world dominated by university thought. The rest of the world is moving towards the high-school pattern. Educators are still known to deplore the training that prepares the student for making a living instead of preparing him for life, but the world's thinking seems definitely to be more concerned with the problem of making a living, broadly speaking, than with life. The swing is away from metaphysics to American pragmatism or instrumentalism, from absolute standards and absolute truths to doctrines that will "work." We are back in the critical atmosphere of David Hume. We are duplicating Socrates' achievement in bringing down philosophy from heaven to dwell among men, where we call it science, even if the Opposition would say that philosophy is being brought down from the mountain peaks to dwell in the high schools.

Mind and spirit in our democracy are harnessed to life by free consent, even as they are being harnessed by force to the policies of state in the totalitarian societies. Under freedom or under despotism, that way lies the drift of events. It is inevitable that the content of culture shall change with the years from what we may roughly call the arts to the sciences. The emphasis will swing from the best that men have thought and said in the past to the best that men are discovering and inventing in the present. In such a scientific, pragmatic civilization our

own high-school nation will have a higher relative standing than it does in the old classical culture.

Not that the American people is sure of primacy, even in a scientific civilization. Its innate middleliness will continue to operate against us. Preoccupation with immediate results in science, the emphasis on practical ends, and above all democratic humanism, for which the familiar name is fellowship, will slow up the march to the highest victories in science. These are still to be won by patient brooding, by disinterested research, by a concentration attainable at the cost of a considerable degree of dehumanization. In science as in the older arts the chances are against the great thinker being a good citizen. The pioneer in science will have to be—like so many pioneers—an eccentric, a hermit and an egoist. It is obviously a role that will continue to be hard to maintain in our humanistic climate where fellowship and citizenship are the first duty of man, where the thinker is under a moral compulsion to take time off from his thoughts to give his message to a forum or a reporter.

We may say, in any event, that the prospects favor the persistence of the American people as the middle nation which history has made it. It is a character that belies its popular reputation. America has been since time immemorial the traditional land of extremes, of unlimited possibilities for good or ill, of violent contrasts, of booms and depressions, a lawless people and a restless people; and there is no lack of evidence to make out a *prima facie* case for every count in the indictment. And yet beneath it all the American people is discovered to be a middle-of-the-road people, a Middle Nation, a petty bourgeois nation, not a frontier or a gunman society but a small-town society.

CHAPTER XXVI

Equality

ABRAHAM LINCOLN at Gettysburg spoke fourscore and seven years after the birth of the nation in the Declaration of Independence and seventy-five years after the organization of a national government under the Constitution. The Gettysburg Address stands almost exactly halfway in time between the establishment of the Federal Government and the sesquicentennial commemoration of that event. At that halfway mark Lincoln saw the nation engaged in a great civil war to test the foundation principle of the American republic—that all men are created equal. Seventy-five years later the sesquicentennial period found the country slowly emerging from what has been called the greatest national crisis since the Civil War. The ordeal took the form of economic collapse but there has been no lack of commentators to explain the business depression as due primarily to the decay of equality in American life, the proposition to which Lincoln saw the nation dedicated.

The evidence does not bear out this contention. Equality, or Opportunity, is still the greatest of all the American constants that we have been examining. It is still the keynote of American life. Equality in our own day has far greater validity than when Thomas Jefferson announced it, far wider acceptance than when Lincoln reaffirmed it. Equality rings out true today over the clangor of dogmatic criticism. In the face of all sardonic contrasts between the multimillionaires and the people of the slums, it is still true that the multimillionaires and the people of the slums freely acknowledge the validity of the basic law of national existence. In their hearts the people in Negro Harlem feel that they are the equals of the Wall Street magnates, and in their hearts the

magnates know that this is so. The rich men may do their best to circumvent this law of our national existence but they do not question it. The people in Harlem may feel that for them equality has not been completely realized in practice; but on the balance of the account their equality is vindicated.

The present status of the Negro in American life is as good a test as we can make to show how much nearer we are to the Jefferson thesis of equality than when Jefferson wrote it into the Declaration of Independence. It did not enter many people's minds in the founding period of the Republic that it was anomalous for a slave-owning society to speak of all men as created equal. Jefferson meant only the equality of free men, just as the democracies of ancient Greece found nothing inconsistent in the presence of slaves and disfranchised aliens. Even for Lincoln equality for the Negro meant only equality in the Jeffersonian sense—a sense which the eugenists and racialists insist on overlooking: an equal right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It meant the equality, say, of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments. Events after Lincoln forced the Fifteenth Amendment and the franchise for the emancipated slaves. In that equality, too, we have by this time acquiesced—that is, speaking as a nation, speaking by the rule and not the exception.

Criticism finds it easy enough to stress the farce of Negro equality in the South where the colored man has been virtually deprived of his vote by special legislation; where he is denied civil rights, such as the right to jury service; where he does not enjoy economic equality, partly as a result of tradition, partly as a consequence of the denial of the two preceding rights. Negro workers accept less pay for a day's work because of their color and previous condition of servitude, and because they cannot assert themselves in the courts and the legislatures. It is far different with the Negro's status in the nation. In the North, where today lives one fourth of the colored race, the Negro not only is allowed to vote but has come to occupy a strategic position in national elections whenever there are still "close" states and close elections instead of landslides and tidal waves. We have no assurance that a more even matching of political parties will not return. The cultivation of the Negro vote in Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York City, if not New York State, is not yet a lost art. It testifies to the essential equality by now conceded to the Negro voter that no one ever thinks of questioning the title of a President of the United States elected by a few thousand Negro votes in a pivotal state.

The argument of the Negro in this test of American equality today

is in place because the Negro is our most conspicuous example of the underprivileged American, especially in post-depression years. In these years the Negro has been only a special illustration in a general thesis which denies the existence of equality in America; which finds the ceiling of the national life growing lower and higher walls enclosing the former open field of Opportunity; which sees class distinctions growing deeper; which sees social Europe reproducing itself here; which talks in terms of hardening arteries and frozen ideals; which sees the American future dedicated to the proposition that all men are not created equal.

It is a doctrine of social petrification which rests in part on incomplete data, in greater part on general assumptions. We start out with the ancient prejudice in favor of the Golden Age and the good old times, and wherever life grows more complicated and more elaborate we recite automatically that "ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey, where wealth accumulates and men decay." Because wealth accumulates we assume that men decay. Because the small farmer gives way to the urban worker we assume that the city man is a much more abject creature than the sturdy farmer. We subscribe to the broadest of all assumptions—that where the economic power lies there will be the political power, because he who pays the piper calls the tune. And we refuse to look deeper into the matter and see what is the nature of this accumulated wealth, who holds it, who really controls it, how hard or easy is access to economic power.

The doors to Opportunity were being shut tight fifty years ago because people then assumed that the Trusts were driving out the small businessman. When it is shown that after fifty years the small businessman still flourishes in his millions the terms are slightly reversed and we are told that the independent retailer is being driven out by the chain stores. When it is shown that the retailer, though feeling the competition of the chain stores, has himself been growing in numbers and is strong enough politically to impose chains on the chain stores in the form of heavy state taxes the argument shifts to the concentration of Finance Capital, which has reached a stage where all American business is under marching orders from Wall Street; a thesis which we have examined and questioned in another place. We scoff at the outworn superstition that every poor boy has a chance to become President of the United States, though in New York City we see in 1940 two poor boys striving to or heading for the Presidency—and this is the poor-boy crop in only part of one state. It has become a favorite assumption that the race of poor boys who rise to be presidents of corporations is

now extinct, though the statistics show the poor boys coming on as fast as ever.

Admit for the sake of the argument that economic power carries with it political control; who is it that holds the economic power? Is it hereditary wealth concentrated in a few hands? Who are the fifty or hundred reigning Families whom it has become the fashion to list as the masters of the nation? It is the economic power of a Henry Ford, who a generation ago was an oil-smeared mechanic in his own garage. It is the Mellon family, which used to be made to sound like the Rothschild family or the Medici family, but whose power and prestige were just about a generation old. A generation ago the Du Ponts were not a great name in the business world. We do not speak here of the older wealth, the Rockefellers and the Morgans, precisely because they are older. They hark back to a time when it is conceded that Opportunity did exist, and the argument is that now we live in different times. To draw up lists of new American multimillionaires who hold the country in the hollow of their hand is really to prove the existence of equality in the sense of free access to Opportunity. These new great fortunes stand there as proof of prizes still to be won by poor boys. Life is not stratified. There are possessors of huge fortunes, but there is no possessing class on the multimillionaire level. Arguments directed against the injustice and social menace of great fortunes are most likely to result in leaving on the average American mind a vivid impression of how easy it is to achieve great wealth.

Equality is today a condition more widespread and a character trait more salient than it has ever been in the country's history. The psychological distance between the multimillionaire employer and the elevator boy is smaller than the distance that separated the small farmer from the plantation owner in the South, the distance between the merchant and the "mechanic" in our colonial and early Federal seaboard towns. It misrepresents the state of things in the country today and the temper of the American people after nearly a decade of business depression to argue that our new social-security policies mean a general loss of faith in the old doctrine of Opportunity. The average American has decided that his chance to become a millionaire is too slim to bother about. The wage earner has settled down to the belief that he will always be a wage earner and he wants security for his old age. That is the state of mind supposed to underlie the great labor unionization movement in Mr Roosevelt's second administration under the leadership of the Committee on Industrial Organization.

But that again is *a priori*. There is really no reason why the growth of

the labor movement should exclude the old American hopefulness. Theory insists that men have turned to the trade unions and to old-age funds in despair of any other reward from our economic system; but social-security laws and hopefulness may well go together. The white-collar man who organizes for higher pay and shorter hours does not thereby give up the hope that someday he may be his own employer or the employer of thousands of other men. He is simply taking the American way, the human way, of getting all that is coming to one, without prejudice to the larger if much dimmer hope. The office clerk organized by the C.I.O. will continue to look forward to the day his ship comes in. The reporter who joins the Newspaper Guild sees no reason why he should not be getting better pay and shorter hours while waiting for his chance to land one of the top jobs on the paper, or to capitalize on his friendships in the business world, or perhaps to finish someday that novel or that play and see what happens. The cafeteria waitress is no doubt grateful for the better pay and shorter hours which the union may have brought her, but she has not abandoned her dream of qualifying someday as a beautician or a trained nurse. It is only dogmatism to assert that the wage earner has at last become reconciled to the station in life in which he was born. We are dealing here with an American Constant; and we need much more evidence than is at present in hand to make out a case.

It is the fallacy of assuming utterly new worlds. If the rise of the new industrial labor unions signalizes the end of American hopefulness we must explain away the earlier American labor organizations, which were far from negligible. After the Armistice the American Federation of Labor had four million members. When the American Federation of Labor was founded in 1881 was it because hopefulness had departed out of American life sixty years ago? Did the skilled workers who compose the A. F. of L. unions decide, fifteen years after the Civil War, that the age of Opportunity was closed to them, and that they must unite for the purpose of obtaining the best wages and working conditions in the sphere of life to which destiny had called them? If so it is odd that despair should have first attacked the most advanced section of the working classes, the trades that have been called the aristocracy of labor. What actually happened more than half a century ago in the case of the American Federation of Labor is that workingmen did unite for higher wages and better hours, but that these objectives were sought by the trade-union members without prejudice to their inalienable right, as American citizens, to look for higher prizes in life than adequate wages and satisfactory working conditions.

If further evidence is needed to disprove the alleged connection between the growth of labor unions and the freezing of opportunity it will be found in the specific case of the powerful garment-workers' unions. Their members are chiefly Jews who constitute the most fluid ethnic element in the country, old stock or new. It certainly cannot be argued that since the beginning of mass immigration about the year 1880 America has offered the Jews no opportunity. By the scores of thousands the Jewish newcomers have emerged from their original status as factory workers. They have prospered in the garment trade, which they have virtually created, but also in many other fields—in small and large business, in the professions, in the arts. If the working masses resort to labor organization and to social protection because they see Opportunity eluding them there should have been no labor unionism among the Jewish workers. Actually we see in the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union or the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union the workers exploiting Opportunity on two fronts. The needle worker organizes to improve his immediate working conditions and to secure the means for raising himself in the world, or to raise his children. No doubt this upward thrust of the Jewish population does not represent a condition obtaining in every American workingman's home or in a majority of such homes. But then at no time in our discussions of Opportunity has it ever been suggested that all the little boys on American farms would become President of the United States, or that all the water boys on the railroads would become president of the company. It has always been a case of exceptional energy, exceptional gifts and exceptional luck; and it is quite feasible to argue that such instances of individual success are not enough to vindicate an unjust economic system oppressive of the working class as a whole. But our present argument is wholly comparative. We are addressing ourselves to the specific charge that the American worker is worse off today than in the past, that his opportunities have shrunk to the vanishing point, that he has become sharply aware of his changed prospects, that he looks upon himself today as a proletarian sealed to his destiny, and that this is why he organizes under the C.I.O. and demands social security. These are general assumptions unsupported by the evidence.

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CHAPTER XXVII

Unprecedented

IT WILL NOT DO, in dealing with the affairs of nations, to cite unprecedented numbers and masses and to deduce therefrom unprecedented psychological and spiritual effects. The character of a people and the *genius loci* transcend mass and quantity. In the year 1793 a majority of the British House of Commons was elected by less than fifteen thousand persons. No less than three hundred and seven members of Parliament were elected by one hundred and fifty-four individuals, including the King and peers—two M.P.s for every elector. In the British General Election of November 1936 there were cast twenty-two million votes. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the population of Great Britain has increased sixfold but the voters are nearly a thousandfold. Yet the sense of continuity, of oneness, is strong between the British nation of very nearly one hundred and fifty years ago and the British nation today. In the early days of 1939 Prime Minister Chamberlain said that Britain was facing an international situation like that which confronted William Pitt.

In 1780 the new Massachusetts constitution was ratified by a popular vote of 6047 against 5654, when the population of Massachusetts was approximately three hundred and twenty-five thousand. In 1936 Massachusetts, with a population of four and a quarter million, had grown thirteenfold, which would be change enough, but the state cast in the Presidential election of 1936 something like 1,800,000 votes. The growth in the electorate in the course of one hundred and fifty-six years was one hundred and fiftyfold. What were the corresponding changes in the life and temper of the Massachusetts people? Familiar enough are the jests about the decay and fall of the old Massachusetts aristocracy and

the accession of the "Boston Irish." Yet the fact is that the stamp of the old New England civilization is still on the new enormously increased Massachusetts population. There are thinkers who say that a difference in quantity ultimately becomes a difference in quality or kind, but when one reads the story of the ratification of the Federal Constitution in the states—the conflicting interests, the strategies and the bargains and the personal equations and the mixed motives and the rest—there is no difference in quality or kind between 1789 and today; it is the same people living in the same tradition. It has been said that in 1789 a line drawn fifty miles from the Atlantic coast and parallel to it would have found most of the supporters of the new Constitution east of the line and most of its opponents west of the line. It was the division that we have known all along between the settled East and the great open spaces of the West, not on the specific issue of Federalism or any single issue, but in regional temper and outlook. The pioneer West of 1789 was suspicious of centralized political power and the West of 1939 is hostile to centralized economic power. When the Roosevelt administration towards the end of 1937 took up the anti-monopoly cause it was really a retreat from the novel philosophy and terminology of the New Deal to the old American radicalism of agrarian hostility to the corporations. It was anticorporation a hundred years ago when Andrew Jackson fought a big corporation, the Bank of the United States. It was anticorporation fifty years later when Grover Cleveland put through the Interstate Commerce Act of 1887. The interests that President Cleveland fought when he assailed the high tariff beneficiaries are the interests against which Secretary of State Cordell Hull, fifty years later, strove to make headway.

It was impressive, in the centennial year of Grover Cleveland's birth, to see how many of the problems of his day were still our problems in 1937, even though much of the anniversary comment on Grover Cleveland began by referring to our "unprecedented" conditions. An opening statement about an utterly changed America since Grover Cleveland and William McKinley rode down Pennsylvania Avenue in 1897 would be followed by a statement of details which proved that over a period of forty years the resemblances far outweighed the changes. In his annual message of 1887 President Cleveland contrasts the complex national life of his own day and age with the simple, almost primitive conditions into which the nation was born just one hundred years earlier. In so doing Mr Cleveland in the centennial year was doing the very same thing that we do today in the sesquicentennial year, when we contrast the complex national life of 1939 with the simple

days of Grover Cleveland. It was in 1887 and not in 1937 that a President invited the attention of his countrymen to the problems confronting the nation in the form of "immense aggregations of capital"; the sharp contrast between "poverty and luxury"; the plight of the masses dedicated to a life of "unremunerative toil"; the problems of our "long-suffering and patient farm population." There is no intention here to imply that these problems may not be more pressing today than they were fifty years ago, or to argue that because the nation surmounted its growing pains half a century ago it will surely do so again, though the thesis is arguable. For the moment we are concerned simply to show the nation of today facing most of the problems that it faced fifty years ago, and many of those that it faced one hundred years ago, and some of those that it faced one hundred and fifty years ago. It was the troubles of a long-suffering farmer that finally spoke out under Daniel Shays in 1786, the climax in a series of events that brought the Constitutional Convention and the Constitution into being. Not many years after the birth of the Federal Union we find the political machine in operation in Tammany Hall; the same Tammany Hall which Grover Cleveland fought in the centennial era of the Union and which a popular upheaval severely chastened in the sesquicentennial year 1937.

The great state bosses who threw the strength of their satrapies to their favorite Presidential candidates have faded from the picture; but the local machines are still in the picture—the Kelly machine in Chicago, the Pendergast machine in Kansas City, the Hague machine in Jersey City, the Kelly machine in Philadelphia, and a Flynn machine in the Bronx and once more a Kelly machine in Brooklyn. The names of the machine engineers, it will be noted, are the names of fifty years ago—it is Kelly and Pendergast and Hague and Flynn and Curley—but the voting numbers have passed in the great cities to new tribes, Jewish, Italian, Polish. And yet there is something appropriate in the survival of the old Irish names in the high command. The nature of the political machine is essentially what it has always been, even if the working crew has changed from Irish to Latin and Jewish. It is again an American constant at work, the Idea impressing itself on the new material. The Irish immigrants of the middle years of the nineteenth century took over the machine idea as developed in the politics of American towns and States, and have in turn transmitted the basic idea and the technique to still newer Americans.

Persistence of the national American character into an indefinite future may be argued not only from our own past record but from analogy. Everywhere else in the world national traits are what they were two

hundred years ago and, in places, two thousand years ago. Englishmen, in the essential picture, are very much what they were under Queen Anne, and Frenchmen under Louis XIV, and Germans under the Great Elector, and Russians under Peter the Great. If this national character has been preserved under the perpetual grindings and collisions of a crowded, competitive Europe it is an outcome all the more readily to be predicted of the American national character in its roomy, isolated, continental home.

How long will this remain a big, roomy continent? To those who see only the forces of change at work, as against our own dogma of fixity, even the most solid of American constants, Size, has felt the touch of time. The physical dimensions of the United States within its present frontiers will obviously be the same one hundred years from now, but the conquest of space which has gone so far in our own day may have brought the Atlantic and Pacific within three or four hours of each other. Is it conceivable that the same three thousand miles of distance from east to west, the same three million square miles of area, will give the American of a century hence the same feeling of spaciousness that he has enjoyed in the past, the sense of unlimited possibilities which is so strong a trait of his character and his history? Can people really think in continental terms when a continent can be spanned in a few hours? How may a land look big to a man when he can almost be said to bestride it like a colossus? In those days it may well be that businessmen, or bureaucrats, will commute from their offices in New York or Washington via stratosphere to their Summer homes in Wyoming; or, let us put it moderately, will week-end over such distances.

The thing may well happen, but the spirit of the American of the year 2040 need not be correspondingly cabined and confined, for at least two reasons. In the first place, there is the thesis that the American character is already set and, being so determined, a changing environment can no longer affect it. After all, the conquests of space already recorded in the course of the nation's existence, as we have discussed them elsewhere, have been much greater than any further progress we can expect short of the actual annihilation of space. We travel by air forty times as fast as George Washington did, and a century hence we may travel four times as fast as today. Obviously if the earlier acceleration has left the national character intact there is every reason to suppose that it will still be the same American who hops from New York to Los Angeles in three or four hours via the stratosphere. The very conquest of a continent of three thousand miles in a few hours is bound to

accentuate the belief in unlimited possibilities. The elapsed time between starting point and landing field is much smaller, but that is because the pace has grown so fast. If the essence of the American spirit is big things done in a big way there are obviously few things conceivably bigger than to span a continent in a few hours.

This unquestioning and even unimaginative acceptance of the triumphs of science to be harnessed to the daily routine, this taking of the miraculous in one's stride, is repeated with every new victory of science. The most persistent and consistent patrons of the airways between the two coasts are the members of the Hollywood picture industry. Hollywood long ago adopted the long-distance telephone for very ordinary purposes. Where a businessman or professor would write a letter or send a telegram, Hollywood talks over long distance. Where nine hundred and ninety-nine well-to-do Americans will take a train between New York and the Coast, the picture profession goes by air. It is impressive when very ordinary people travel like an eagle in the air. In dimensions of time the American continent has obviously grown small, but this has been achieved by hitting up the pace and vibration. It is bigger and better noises, bigger and better bluster—if we wish to be cynical—but it is bigness in one dimension or another. It is America.

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